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*Her Eye submissive to the ground declining
In veneration of the Godlike Man.*

Book IX line, 55.

W. Lillien del.

E. Burnford scult.

Pub. by J. Walker, Paternoster Row and J. Harris, S^t Pauls Church Yard.

LEONIDAS,

A Poem.

By
Richard Glover.



The muse, level with the soldier's force
The muse, Oth and dash'd in en tero
Full on the Persians' force

LONDON,

Published by J. Walker, Paternoster Row and J. Harris

St Paul's Church Yard.

LEONIDAS:

A POEM.



BY

RICHARD GLOVER.



LONDON:

Printed for J. Walker; J. Johnson and Co.; J. Richardson; R. Faulder and Son; F. C. and J. Rivington; Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe; R. Lea; J. Nunn; J. Cuthell; E. Jeffery; A. K. Newman and Co.; Lackington, Allen, and Co.; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Cadell and Davies; Wilkie and Robinson; J. Booker; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; Sherwood, Neely, and Jones; J. Asperne; R. Scholey; and J. Harris.



1810.



RICHARD GLOVER.

MR. Glover, the author of the celebrated poem of *Leonidas*, was born in London, and was the son of John Glover, Esq. an eminent Hamburgh merchant, who married Miss West, sister of the Right Honourable Richard West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Mr. Glover's uncle being in that high situation, it was originally intended that he should be brought up to the law; but the Lord Chancellor dying when his nephew was very young, the plan was altered, and he was brought up to his father's profession.

Mr. Glover, by a lady he married (Miss Nunn) of the county of Essex, and with whom he received a considerable fortune, had three children; a daughter, who died young; Captain Glover, who died in the service of his country off the island of Jamaica, commanding his Majesty's ship *Janus*; and Richard, his surviving son, who served in the last parliament for the borough of Penryn, in Cornwall.

He received the whole of his education, under the Rev. Daniel Sanxay, at Cheam school; a place which he afterwards delighted to visit; and sometimes attended the anniversary held of late years in London, where he seemed happy in relating his juvenile adventures. At this seminary he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress, and early began to exhibit specimens of his poetical powers.

As a merchant, he soon made a conspicuous figure: but his commercial affairs did not occupy his whole attention; he still found leisure to cultivate the study of poetry, and continued to associate with those who were eminent in literature and science. One of his earliest friends was Green, the ingenious, though obscure, author of that truly original poem entitled the "*Spleen*," which, in 1737, soon after his death, was published by Mr.

Glover. This excellent performance contains the following presage of his literary eminence, with an evident allusion to his *Leonidas*, which he had begun when very young.

But there's a youth that you can name,
 Who needs no leading-strings to fame,
 Whose quick maturity of brain
 The birth of Pallas may explain:
 Dreaming of whose depending fate,
 I heard Melpomene debate;
 This, this is he that was foretold
 Should emulate our Greeks of old;
 Inspir'd by me with sacred art,
 He sings, and rules the varied heart;
 If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,
 We hear the thunder in his verse;
 If he describe love turn'd to rage,
 The furies riot on his page;
 If he fair liberty and law,
 By ruffian power expiring, draw,
 The keener passions then engage
 Aright, and sanctify their rage;
 If he attempt disastrous love,
 We hear those plaints that wound the grove;
 Within the kinder passions glow,
 And tears, distill'd from pity, flow.

The observation made upon Gray, by his friend, the late Earl of Orford, "that he never was a boy," has been applied to Glover. At the early age of sixteen, he wrote

A poem to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton; which was followed by

Leonidas, first printed in 1737.

London, or the Progress of Commerce, a poem not unworthy of the author of *Leonidas*.

Hosier's Ghost, one of the most pathetic and beautiful ballads in our language.

Boadicea, } tragedies, performed both with much ap-
 Medea, } plause.

And the *Athenaid*, or a sequel to *Leonidas*, and forming a counterpart to it, in thirty books, presented

to the world, with a few alterations from the pen of a friend, in the year 1788.

He also wrote a second part of *Medea*, not yet performed.

Leonidas was inscribed to Lord Cobham; and, on its first appearance, was received by the public with great applause.

At the time of its publication, a zeal, or rather rage, for liberty prevailed in England. A constellation of great men, distinguished by their virtues, as well as by their talents, set themselves in opposition to the court. Every species of composition that bore the sacred name of freedom, recommended itself to their protection, and soon obtained possession of the public favour; hence a poem founded on the noblest principles of liberty, and displaying the most brilliant examples of patriotism, soon found its way into the world. It was praised in the warmest terms by Lyttleton and Doctor Pemberton, and passed through three editions in 1737 and 1738; but, as its favourable reception was not founded entirely on its intrinsic merits, it experienced afterwards, without deserving it, the fate of those literary productions which are indebted for a temporary celebrity to the influence of party-principles.

It first came out in nine books; but in the last edition published by the author (in 1770) was extended to twelve; and had also several new characters added, besides placing the old ones in new situations. The improvements were very considerable; but the public attention was not sufficiently alive to recompense the pains bestowed on this once popular performance.

Though not in the highest class of epic poems, it cannot be read without delight. It is characterized by a bold spirit of liberty, by generous, tender, and noble sentiments. The author every where appears a virtuous man and a good citizen. The characters are finely discriminated, as is justly exemplified in Dr. Pemberton's learned commentary; and the style possesses many poetical graces, though it is sometimes familiar and prosaic. It abounds in the affecting, the tender, and the beautiful, rather than in the heroic and sublime. The parting of *Leonidas* and his wife, is, perhaps, more

interesting than that of Hector and Andromache. The episode of Ariana and Teribazus is poetical and pleasing. On the whole, we may safely venture to place Leonidas by the side of Lucan's Pharsalia, Statius's Thebaid, Camoens's Lusiad, and the Henriade of Voltaire.

Mr. Glover passed a great portion of his time with Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, Mr. George Lyttleton, afterwards Lord Lyttleton, Earl Temple, Lord Cobham, and many others of the same principles; his connexion with whom introduced him to the notice of Frederick Prince of Wales, who honoured him with his friendship, and distinguished him by his countenance and patronage.

His talents for public speaking, his knowledge of political affairs, and his information concerning trade and commerce, pointed him out to the merchants of London as a proper person to conduct their application to Parliament, on the subject of the neglect of their trade. He accepted the office; and in summing up the evidence gave very striking proofs of his oratorical powers. This remarkable speech was pronounced at the bar of the House of Commons, January 27, 1742, and soon afterwards published, under the title of "A short account of the late application to Parliament, made by the merchants of London, upon the neglect of their trade, with the evidence thereupon, as summed up by Mr. Glover." By his appearance in behalf of the merchants of London, he acquired, and with great justice, the character of an able and steady patriot; and, indeed, on every occasion, he shewed his zeal for the commercial interests of the nation, as well as his attachment to the welfare of his countrymen in general, and that of the city of London in particular.

Our author, being induced by the importunity of his friends, offered himself, in the year 1751, as a candidate for the place of Chamberlain of the City of London, in opposition to the late Thomas Harrison, Esq. Unfortunately for him, he did not declare his intention till most of the livery had engaged their votes; to which circumstance was ascribed the loss of his election. On this occasion he addressed the livery in a very manly and animated speech.

In the parliament which met at the accession of his present Majesty (1761), he was elected for Weymouth. He undertook to manage the interests of the merchants and traders of London concerned in the trade to Germany and Holland, and of the dealers in foreign linens, in their application to Parliament in May 1774. Both the speeches made on these occasions were published within the same year.

In 1775 he engaged on behalf of the West India merchants, in their application to Parliament, examined the witnesses, and summed up the evidence in the same masterly manner he had done on a former occasion. For the assistance he afforded the merchants in this business, he was complimented by them with a service of plate, of the value of 300*l*. The speech which he delivered in the house was printed in that year. This was the last opportunity he had of displaying in public his oratorical talents. Having now arrived at a period of life which demanded a recess from business, he retired, and wore out the remainder of his days with dignity and with honour, in the exercise of the virtues of private life, and in his attention to his muse. He died at his house in Albemarle-street, November 25, 1785, in the 75th year of his age, and was buried in the family-vault in St. Edmund the King's, in Lombard-street.

We shall conclude this short account of the life and writings of our Author by the following observations upon Leonidas, from the pen of Lyttleton.

“ Since I have read Leonidas,” says he (*Common Sense*, No. 10), “ I have been so full of all the beauties I met with in it, that, to give some vent, I found it necessary to write to you, and invite my countrymen to take part with me in the pleasure of admiring what so justly deserves their admiration: and in doing this I have yet a farther view; I desire to do them good as well as please them; for never yet was an epic poem wrote with so noble and so useful a design; the whole plan and purpose of it being to shew the superiority of freedom over slavery; and how much virtue, public spirit, and the love of liberty, are preferable, both in their nature and effects, to riches, luxury, and the insolence of power.

“ This great and instructive moral is set forth by an action the most proper to illustrate it of all that ancient or modern history can afford, enforced by the most sublime spirit of poetry, and adorned by all the charms of an active and warm imagination, under the restraint of a cool and sober judgment.

“ And it has another special claim to protection; for, I will venture to say, there never was an epic poem which had so near a relation as this to common sense; the Author of it not having allowed himself the liberty, so largely taken by his predecessors, of making excursions beyond the bounds, and out of sight of it, into the airy regions of poetical mythology. There are neither fighting gods, nor scolding goddesses; neither miracles, nor enchantments; neither monsters, nor giants, in his work; but whatsoever human nature can afford that is most astonishing, marvellous, and sublime.

“ And it has this particular merit to recommend it, that, though it has quite the air of an ancient epic poem, there is not so much as a single simile in it that is borrowed from any of the ancients; and yet I believe there is hardly any poem that has such a variety of beautiful comparisons; so just a confidence had the Author in the extent and rich abundance of his own imagination.

“ The artful conduct of the principal design; the skill in connecting and adapting every episode to the carrying on and serving that design; the variety of characters, the great care to keep them, and distinguish each from the other by a propriety of sentiment and thought; all these are excellencies which the best judges of poetry will be particularly pleased with in Leonidas.

“ Upon the whole, I look upon this poem as one of those few of distinguished worth and excellence, which will be handed down with respect to all posterity; and which, in the long revolution of past centuries, but two or three countries have been able to produce. And I cannot help congratulating my own, that, after having in the last age brought forth a Milton, she has in this produced two more such poets as we have the happiness to see flourish together; I mean Mr. Pope and Mr. Glover.”

PREFACE.

TO illustrate the following Poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew, by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to fix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed by an uncertain rumour, which rendered his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a personal resentment against him; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, named Leutychides, who aspired to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus, by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expelled from his regal office in the commonwealth; a Lacedæmonian, distinguished in action and council, and the only king of Sparta, who, by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increased the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who ruled, in conjunc-

tion with this Lentychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly, not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censured by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedæmon; and marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen; who, with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanced as far as Thessalia; when, hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmonians at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ

on the side of Greece; so that his whole attention was engaged by those who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes what he had seen; which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair when they were determined to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes, notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians, to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies: which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter: fresh troops still succeeded; but with no better fortune than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms, both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch, in his *Læonic Apothegms*, reports, that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malim, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thou-

sand of the Persian army into Greece, through a pass which lay higher up the country, among the mountains of Oeta: whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and, with the utmost expedition, marched to Thermopylæ.

Leonidas no sooner received information that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus; and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians, the most conspicuous, next to Leonidas, was Diencees, who, being told that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maren, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias, a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety; but sent away his only son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

Herodotus relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell, with great numbers of their enemies: but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others, affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning have withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most

obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus. "The Grecians, having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians before they could be apprised that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared; and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion: when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies; for, as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watchword, and of confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, without difficulty, might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death; but he, at the beginning of the tumult, betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those who were left behind; then, while night lasted, they ranged through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true state of things, held the inconsiderable number of their enemies

in contempt; yet were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided a near engagement; but, enclosing the Grecians on every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them at a distance, and, in the end, destroyed their whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians, who, under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All must admire the virtue of these men, who, with one consent, maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece, and esteemed a glorious death more eligible than to live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbarians could have conjectured such an event? who could have expected that five hundred men would have dared to attack a million? Wherefore shall not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men, as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of their lives was the necessary consequence of their undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit; and, among all the great names delivered down to remembrance, are the only heroes who obtained more glory in their fall than others from the brightest victories? With justice may they be deemed the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those who were conquerors in the battles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory of that valour exerted in the defence of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there never were any before these who attained to immortality through the mere excess of virtue; whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been recorded by historians only, but hath been celebrated by numbers of poets, among others, by Simonides, the lyric."

Pausanias, in his *Laconics*, considers the defence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas as an action superior to any achieved by his contemporaries, and to all the exploits of preceding ages. "Never," says he, "had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces under Hydarnes been conducted through a path over mount Oeta; and, by that means encompass-

ing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leonidas. Nor is it improbable, that such a commander, at the head of such troops, should have maintained his post in so narrow a pass till the whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a high degree of veneration and applause from past ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following poem; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by disinterested zeal and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: to him therefore a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory and love of liberty, is due, from the nature of the subject.

R. GLOVER.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece, the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprised of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the straits of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled, in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no further than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany, and die with, him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus; those who are already possessed of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother, Polydorus, in Persia.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

THE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life
To save his country at the Oetæan straits,
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,
O Muse, record! The Hellespont they pass'd,
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
To Corinth flew. Her isthmus was the seat
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd, to learn
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods
That morn expected from the Delphian dome.
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,
And thus address'd them. 'For immediate war,
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.'

Here Alpheus paus'd. Leutyehides, who shar'd
With great Leonidas the sway, uprose
And spake. 'Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.
Why from her bosom should Laconia send
Her valiant race to wage a distant war
Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd
Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,
Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood
That Isthmus inaccessible secures.
There let our standards rest. Your solid strength
If once you scatter, in defence of states
Remote and feeble, you betray your own,

And merit Jove's derision.' With assent
The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd—

'O most ungen'rous counsel! most unwise!
Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence
Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state
Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes,
And trust th' impending dangers of the field
To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear
That to Barbarian violence we leave
Her unprotected walls? Her hoary sires,
Her helpless matrons, and their infant race
To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods
Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main,
With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms,
Will soon transport them to a happier clime,
Safe from insulting foes, from false allies;
And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.
Then shall we feel the unresisted force
Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,
By us betray'd to bondage, will support
A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear
For our destruction. But, my friends, reject
Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would blast
Your long-establish'd honours, and assist
The proud invader. O eternal king
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!
Each low and partial passion thence expel!
Greece is our gen'ral mother. All must join
In her defence, or sep'rate each must fall.'

This said, authority and shame controll'd
The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.
He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,
Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,
The Pythian maid unfolded heaven's decrees.
He came; but discontent and grief o'ercast
His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,
Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread
Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung
Sad expectation. Not a whisper told
The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd,

All still as death, to hear the solemn tale.
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,
 Soft breathing, lightly with its wings along
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main;
 So through the wide and list'ning crowd no sound,
 No voice, but thine, O Agis! broke the air;
 While thus the issue of thy awful charge
 Thy lips deliver'd. ' Spartans, in your name
 I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom
 Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,
 When in these words the deity reply'd --

" Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms
 Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust,
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
 Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn.'

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all who view'd
 The Gorgon features were congeal'd to stone,
 With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,
 And horror, living in their marble form;
 Thus, with amazement rooted where they stood,
 In speechless terror frozen, on their kings
 The Spartans gaz'd: but soon their anxious looks
 All on the great Leonidas unite,
 Long known his country's refuge. He alone
 Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays
 His godlike presence. Dignity and grace
 Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins
 With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine
 Sublimest virtue and desire of fame,
 Where justice gives the laurel; in his eye
 The inextinguishable spark, which fires
 The souls of patriots; while his brow supports
 Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
 Serene he cast his looks around, and spake--

' Why this astonishment on ev'ry face,
 Ye men of Sparta? Does the name of death

Create this fear and wonder? O my friends,
Why do we labour through the arduous paths
Which lead to virtue? Fruitless were the toil,
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd
The distant summit, if the fear of death
Could intercept our passage. But a frown
Of unavailing terror he assumes
To shake the firmness of a mind which knows
That, wanting virtue, life is pain and wo,
That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,
And looks around for happiness in vain.
Then speak, O Sparta! and demand my life.
My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,
And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame
The gods allow to many; but to die
With equal lustre is a blessing Jove
Among the choicest of his boons reserves,
Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.'

Salvation thus to Sparta he proclaim'd.
Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,
Suspending praise; nor praise at last resounds
In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n;
A reverential murmur breathes applause.
So were the pupils of Lyncæus train'd
To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb
Before their senate, ephori, and kings,
Nor exultation into clamour broke.
Amidst them rose Dienecees, and thus—

'Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes shew
The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd
In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,
Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger, bend.
Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands
To slavery and rapine. They will shrink
Before your standard, and their native seats
Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye sires,
Who with a growing race have bless'd the state:
That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece, forbid
Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause
A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more?'

Bold Alpheus next. 'Command my swift return
Amid the Isthmian council to declare
Your instant march.' His dictates all approve.
Back to the Isthmus he unweary'd speeds.

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps
Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth
His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port
Of his divine progenitor; impell'd
By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod
Invincible, to face in horrid war
The triple form of Geryon, or against
The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

Say, Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,
Nor less by honour, offer'd now to bleed?
Dieneces the foremost, brave and staid,
Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields
Well order'd lines of battle. Maron next,
Twin-born with Alpheus, shews his manly frame.
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen
Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war
His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,
And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul
Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd
By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race.
High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal
Support and counsel from the gods requir'd,
Was sent the hallow'd messenger, to learn
Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,
From rocky Delphi, from Dordona's shade,
Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell
Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.
Three hundred more complete th' intrepid band;
Illustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,
The future guardians of Laconia's state.
Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,
Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood
Were they. Megistias, heav'n-enlighten'd seer,
Had left his native Acarnanian shore;
Along the border of Eurotas chose
His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,
And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath
Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,

Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm
From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught
To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.

But to his home Leonidas retir'd.

There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd
His mighty soul, while nature in his breast
A short emotion rais'd. 'What sudden grief,
What cold reluctance, now unmans my heart,
And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay
Leonidas; death, often seen and scorn'd,
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?
Or to relinquish life in all its pride,
With all my honours blooming round my head,
Repines my soul; or rather to forsake,
Eternally forsake, my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?
Leonidas, awake! Shall these withstand
The public safety? Hark! thy country calls.
O sacred voice! I hear thee. At the sound
Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;
Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive
My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame,
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,
With wings unweary'd wilt protect my tomb.'

His virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd
When Agis enter'd. 'If my tardy lips,'
He thus began, 'have hitherto forborne
To bring their grateful tribute of applause,
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,
Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man!
Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard,
Forget not her, sole victim of distress
Amid the general safety. To assuage
Such pain fraternal tenderness is weak.'

The king embrac'd him, and reply'd, 'O best,
O dearest man! conceive not but my soul
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days
Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.
Can I, who yield my breath lest others mourn,
Lest thousands should be wretched, when she pines,
More lov'd than any, tho' less dear than all,

Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,
 If thou with grateful memory record,
 My name and fate, O Sparta! pass not this
 Unheeded by. The life for thee resign'd
 Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,
 Nor were they common joys I left behind.'

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
 In tend'rest passion. Then in eager haste
 The faithful partner of his bed he sought.
 Amid her weeping children sat the queen
 Immovable and mute. Her swimming eyes
 Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er
 Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.
 As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,
 The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads
 The radiant vesture of her silver light
 O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,
 Divinely graceful, shining through her grief,
 Brighten'd the cloud of wo. Her lord approach'd.
 Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice
 Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time
 Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
 She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts--

' O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;
 If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words
 Can check the rapid current of distress,
 How am I mark'd for misery! How long!
 When of life's journey less than half is pass'd,
 And I must hear those calming sounds no more,
 Nor see that face which makes affliction smile?

This said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.
 Her orphan children, her devoted lord,
 Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,
 Her ever-during solitude of wo,
 All rise in mingled horror to her sight,
 When thus in bitterest agony she spake--

' O whither art thou going from my arms?
 Shall I no more behold thee? Oh! no more,
 In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,
 Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,
 And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,
 Why would'st thou hurry to the dreary gates

Of death, uncall'd? Another might have bled,
 Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
 Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure.
 Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.
 All with these babes lament a father lost.
 Alas! how heavy is our lot of pain!
 Our sighs must last when ev'ry other breast
 Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss.
 Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek
 One pause for my instruction how to bear
 Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.'

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd
 Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd—
 'I see, I share thy agony. My soul
 Ne'er knew how warm the prevalence of love,
 How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour;
 Nor was she once insensible to thee
 In all her fervour to assert my fame.
 How had the honours of my name been stain'd
 By hesitation? Shameful life, prefer'd
 By an inglorious colleague, would have left
 No choice but what were infamy to shun,
 Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more
 That, of thy love regardless, or thy tears,
 I rush uncall'd to death. The voice of fate,
 The gods, my fame, my country, press my doom.
 Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh
 That tide of woe? Leonidas must fall.
 Alas! far heavier misery impends
 O'er thee and these, if soften'd by thy tears,
 I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,
 Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n,
 Claim for my country, for my sons and thee.
 Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
 On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart
 E'er known a pause in love, or pious care?
 Now shall that care, that tenderness be shewn
 Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies
 For Lacedæmon's safety; thou wilt share,
 Thou and thy children, the diffusive good.
 I am selected by th' immortal gods
 To save a people. Should my timid heart

That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge
Thee too in shame, in sorrow. 'Thou wouldst mourn
With Lacedæmon; wouldst with her sustain
Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.
Behold thy sons, now worthy of their name,
Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would pine
Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts
Beat at the sound of liberty no more.

On their own merit, on their father's fame,
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
Before the world illustrious will they rise,
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.'

Here paus'd the patriot. In religious awe
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;
Ceas'd for a moment, soon again to stream.
Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs, renew'd,
Surpassing utt'rance, intercept her sighs.

Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue.
In speechless anguish on the hero's breast
She sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.
His soul no longer struggles to confine
Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek,
Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in wo,
Amid his children, who inclose him round,
He stands, indulging tenderness and love
In graceful tears, when thus, with lifted eyes
Address'd to heaven, 'Thou ever-living pow'r,
Look down propitious, sire of gods and men!
O to this faithful woman, whose desert
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!
And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!
But, since that spirit I from thee derive
Transports me from them to resistless fate,
Be thou their guardian! Teach them, like thyself,
By glorious labours to embellish life,
And from their father let them learn to die!'

Here ending, forth he issues, and assumes

Before the ranks his station of command.
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n
On Phlegra's plains, to meet the giant sons
Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd
The deities embattled; while their king
Tower'd in the front, with thunder in his grasp.
Thus through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd
Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow
The multitude, exulting. On he treads
Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues
Extol and hail him as their guardian god.
Firm in his nervous hand he grips the spear.
Low as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs
The massy shield, and o'er his burnish'd helm
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
Around whose brows entwining laurels play,
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way
Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast
Is all possess'd by glory; which dispell'd
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret
For those he left behind. The rev'rend train
Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear,
To take their final, solemn leave, and grace
Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow
In civil pomp their venerable robes,
Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop
Of warriors press behind him. Maron here,
With Menalippus, warm in flow'ry prime;
There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief
Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend
The loftiest mansions; thronging o'er the roofs,
Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they march.
So parted Argo from the Iolchian strand
To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,
Rang'd on the cliffs, o'ershading Neptune's face,
Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes
Admiring; still in pæans bless'd the helm,
By Greece entrusted with her chosen sons
For high adventures on the Colchian shore.
Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds.

Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,
 Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd
 The many-headed Hydra, and the lake
 To endless fame consign'd. Th' unweary'd bands
 Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,
 And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
 Six days incessant was their march parsu'd,
 When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves
 Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.
 Below the wide horizon then the sun
 Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night
 Glean'd from the centre of th' ethereal vault,
 And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed
 Her placid light. Leonidas detains
 Dienece and Agis. Open stands
 The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
 As here they sit conversing, from the hill,
 Which rose before them, one of noble port
 Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope
 He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew
 The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd—

‘ O thou, with swiftness by the gods endu'd
 To match the ardour of thy daring soul,
 What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks
 Neglect to arm and face the public foe?’

‘ Good news gives wings,’ said Alpheus. ‘ Greece is
 arm'd.

The neighb'ring Isthmus holds th' Arcadian bands.
 From Mantinea Diophantus leads
 Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls
 With Hegesander move. A thousand more,
 Who in Orchomenus reside, and range
 Along Parthasius or Cyllene's brow,
 Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
 Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs,
 Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam'd,
 Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.
 Four hundred warriors brave Alcmaeon draws
 From stately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march
 From Phlius: them Eupalamus commands.
 An equal number of Mycenæ's race

Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone
Of thee, and threat'ning Greece, the Thebans arm.
A few in Thebes authority and rule
Usurp. Corrupted with barbarian gold,
They quench the gen'rous eleutherian flame
In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.
By specious tales the multitude they cheat,
Establishing base measures on the plea
Of public safety. Others are immers'd
In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd,
In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.
Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field.
The wily Anaxander is their chief
With Leontiades. To see their march
I staid; then hasten'd to survey the straits,
Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.

‘ For ever mingled with a crumbling soil,
Which moulders round th’ indented Malian coast,
The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,
Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,
Thermopylae is stretch’d. Where broadest spread,
It measures threescore paces, bounded here
By the salt ooze, which underneath presents
A dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs
Of wooded Ceta overlook the pass,
And far beyond, o’er half the surge below,
Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth
An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,
A wall with gates and tow’rs. The Loerian force
Was marching forward. Them I pass’d, to greet
Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch’d
Seven hundred spears before th’ important fence.
His brother’s son attends the rev’rend chief,
Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,
Yet more for temperance of mind, renown’d,
In early bloom with brightest honours shines,
Nor wantons in the blaze.’ Here Agis spake—

‘ Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.
He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn’d
With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bless’d,
His gentle virtues take from Envy’s lips

That blasting venom; and her baneful eye
Strives on his worth to smile.' In silence all
Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds—

' Plataea's chosen veterans I saw,
Small in their number, matchless in their fame.
Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword
At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.
These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,
Unknown to strangers, winds an upper strait,
Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.
Ere these brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay
A stately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise,
He utter'd rapture, but austere ly blam'd
Laconia's tardy counsels; while the ships
Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides,
Which flow not distant from our future post.
This was the far-fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,
By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims
The first of Attic poets; him the plains
Of Marathon a soldier, try'd in arms.'

' Well may Athenians murmur,' said the king.
' Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.
By morn beyond the Isthmus we will spread
A gen'rous banner. In Laconian strains
Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame
Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract
The brighter muse of Athens, in the song
Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.
Share in our fate: or, hast'ning home, report
How much already thy discerning mind,
Thy active limbs, have merited from me;
How serv'd thy country.' From th' impatient lips
Of Alpheus swift these fervid accents broke—

' I have not measur'd such a tract of land,
Have not, untir'd, beheld the setting sun,
Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps,
To animate the Grecians, that myself
Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.
Return? Ah! no. A second time my speed
Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs
Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain

An honourable grave. And, oh! amid
 His country's perils, if a Spartan breast
 May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge
 I seek, not only for th' insulted state,
 But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,
 Than I and Maron, bless'd our father's years,
 Child of his age, and Pólydorns nam'd.
 His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,
 Was bent to strenuous virtue. Gen'rous scorn
 Of pain, or danger, taught his early strength
 To struggle patient with severest toils.
 Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
 When frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,
 Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge,
 To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,
 As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,
 A savage corsair of the Persian king,
 My brother, naked and defenceless, bore,
 Ev'n in my sight, to Asia; there to waste,
 With all the promise of its growing worth,
 His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,
 Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,
 The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat
 His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear
 Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
 O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs
 In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe?

Here interpos'd Dieneceæ. Their hands
 He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd—

‘O that Lycurgus from the shades might rise
 To praise the virtue which his laws inspire!’

Thus, till the dead of night, these heroes pass'd
 The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd
 Each other's virtue. Happiest of men!
 At length, with gentle heaviness, the pow'r
 Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains
 Their magnanimity and zeal to rest;
 When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
 Immers'd in midnight shade her silver head.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds, in conjunction with these forces, towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is joined by Dithyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertained by Oilcus, the public host of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompanied by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oilcus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is informed that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

AURORA spreads her purple beams around,
When move the Spartans. Their approach is known.
The Isthmian council, and the diff'rent chiefs
Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong,
Alcmaeon, Clonius, Diophantus brave,
With Hegesander. At th'ir head is seen
Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks
Obey; Mycenæ, once august in pow'r,
In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king
'The chieftain spake--' Leonidas, survey
Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,
Believe not we can fear, deriv'd from those
Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge
The strength of Greece; who desert left the fields
Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.'

Leonidas replies not, but his voice
Directs to all--' Illustrious warriors, hail!
Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,
Your gen'rous ardour, in the common cause.
But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,
O venerable synod, who consign
To our protecting sword the gate of Greece,
Thrice hail! Whate'er by valour we obtain,
Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes
Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern
Their various tempers. Some, with partial care,
To guard their own, neglect the public, weal.
Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,
Corruption there, presides. O fire the brave

To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.
Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold,
The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray
Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,
Or call them back to honour. Let us all
Be link'd in sacred union, and this land
May face the world's whole multitude in arms.
If for the spoil by Paris borne to Troy,
A thou and keels the Hellespont o'erspread,
Shall not again confederated Greece
Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give
What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste
To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,
He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.
But, as the gods conceal how long our strength
May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield,
Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece
Range all her free-born numbers in the field.'

Leonidas concluded. Awful steep
Before the sage assembly one, supreme
And old in office, who address'd the king—

'Thy bright example ev'ry heart unites.
From thee her happiest omens Greece derives
Of concord, safety, liberty, and fame.
Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress
Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host;
The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem
Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.'

This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,
Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward
Due to thy name through endless time. Once more
His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought
His native land, which he alone can save;
Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er
The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind
In deep arrangement. So th' imperial ship,
With stately bulk, along the heaving tide,
In military pomp, conducts the pow'r
Of some proud navy, bounding from the port,
To bear the vengeance of a mighty state
Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon
They march; when, halting as they take repast,

Across the plain before them they descry
 A troop of Thespians. One above the rest
 In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,
 Whose gold-emblazon'd orb collects the beams
 Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne,
 Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,
 With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,
 Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view,
 Beneath the radiant honours of his crest,
 A countenance of youth, in rosy prime
 And manly sweetness, won the fix'd regard
 Of each beholder. With a modest grace
 He came, respectful, tow'rd the king, and shew'd
 That all ideas of his own desert
 Were sunk in veneration. So the god
 Of light salutes his empyreal sire;
 When from his altar, in th' embow'ring grove
 Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
 Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears
 In hymns his praises from the sons of men,
 He reascends the high Olympian seats:
 Such reverential homage on his brow,
 O'ershading, softens his effulgent bloom
 With loveliness and grace. The king receives
 Th' illustrious Thespian thus—' My willing tongue
 Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear
 All in thy aspect to become that name,
 Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal
 Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul
 Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend.'

To him the youth—' O bulwark of our weal,
 My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips
 Of some benevolent, some gen'rous, friend
 To thee have sounded in a partial strain,
 And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight
 I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,
 The Theban, Loerian, by the fam'd in war,
 Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.
 Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.'

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd.
 By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall
 The march continues; then by day-spring sweeps

The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,
 Displays the grisly face of battle, rough
 With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length
 Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd
 His gallant Thespian host. The centre boasts
 Leonidas, the leader, who retains
 The good Megistias near him. In the rear
 Dienece commanded, who in charge
 Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,
 For these instructions---' Let thine eye, young man,
 Dwell on the order of our varying march;
 As champaign, valley, mountain, or defile,
 Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus
 Conducts not his Barbarians, like the sands
 In number. Yet the discipline of Greece
 They will encounter, feeble as the sands
 Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.'

To him th' inquiring youth---' The martial tread
 The flute's slow warble, both in just accord,
 Entrance my senses; but let wonder ask,
 Why is that tender vehicle of sound
 Preferr'd in war by Sparta? Other Greeks
 To more sonorous music rush in fight.'

' Son of my friend,' Dienece rejoins,
 ' Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta's law
 With human passions, source of human woes,
 Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs
 Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat
 To principle and order. Music too,
 By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;
 Still to her plan subservient, melts in notes
 Which cool and sooth, not irritate and warm.
 Thus by habitual abstinence apply'd
 To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire
 By modes of duty, not by ardour, sway'd,
 O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,
 At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.'

' O might I merit a Laconian name?
 The Acarnanian answer'd---' But explain
 What is the land we traverse? what the hill,
 Whose parted summit in a spacious void
 Admits a bed of clouds? and, gracious, tell

Whose are those suits of armour which I see
 Borne by two Helots? At the questions pleas'd,
 Dienece continues—' Those belong
 To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,
 They, disencumber'd, all at large precede
 This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves,
 Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,
 Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.
 This tract is Phocis. That divided hill
 Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine
 Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death
 The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood
 A crop will spring of victory to Greece.'

' And these three hundred, high in birth and rank,
 All citizens of Sparta'—cries the youth.

' They all must bleed,' Dienece subjoins,
 ' All, with their leader: so the law decrees.'

To him, with earnest looks, the gen'rous youth—

' Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour
 Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace
 Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force
 Of thy instruction.'—' Menalippus, no,'
 Return'd the chief; ' not thou of Spartan breed,
 Nor call'd to perish. Thou, unwedded too,
 Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,
 Live to enjoy, our solitary fall.

Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.
 The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,
 Son of Megistias. In my name command
 Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp.

We pitch our tents in Locris.' Quick the youth
 His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,
 Where, at the call of Alpheus, Locris show'd
 Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,
 The sated warriors soon in slumber lose
 The memory of toil. His watchful round
 Dienece, with Menalippus, takes.

The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign
 To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling shew'd,
 All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side
 Was fenc'd by trees high shadowing. The front
 Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes

At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs
 A small redundance fed a shallow brook,
 O'er smoothest pebbles rippling, just to wake,
 Not startle, silence, and the ear of night
 Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around
 The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep;
 Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat
 Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain
 Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
 Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
 Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted sound,
 Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
 Th' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach
 A broad and verdant circle, thick inclos'd
 With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.
 The ground was holy, and the central spot
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb
 Of skreening trees, th' external circuit swarm'd
 With sheep and bees, each neighbouring hamlet's
 wealth

Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,
 Whom, by the name of Melibceus hail'd,
 A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief,
 He, nigh the altar, to his rural friends
 Address'd these words. 'O, sent from diff'rent lords
 With contribution to the public wants,
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox for once impart;
 That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,
 We, to our summons true, ere noontide blaze,
 May join Oileus, and his praise obtain!'

He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,
 Combin'd with bleating notes and tinkling bells,
 With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,
 Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,
 Along the valley, herd and flock are driv'n
 Successive; halting oft to harmless spoil
 Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight.
 While Melibceus marshall'd with address
 The inoffensive host, unseen in shades,

Dienecees applauded, and the youth
 Of Menalippus caution'd. ' Let no word
 Impede the careful peasant. On his charge
 Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid,
 He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
 That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
 Our debt to nature.' On a carpet dry
 Of moss, beneath a wholesome beech, they lay,
 Arm'd as they were. Their slumber, short, retires
 With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,
 The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth
 In Menalippus caught the morning rays,
 To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide
 Of cultivated hillocks, dales, and lawns;
 Where mansions, hamlets, interpos'd; where domes
 Rose to their gods, through consecrated shades.
 He then exclaims—' O say, can Jove devote
 These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames?'

The Spartan answers—' Ravage, sword, and fire,
 Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.
 Suffice it these invaders, soon or late,
 Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood,
 With spoils abundant to rebuild the fane.
 Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,
 So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good
 No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.'

Beside the public way, an oval fount
 Of marble sparkled with a silver spray
 Of falling rills, collected from above.
 The army halted, and their hollow casques
 Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose
 An edifice, compos'd of native roots,
 And oaken trunks, of knotted girth unwrought.
 Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd, arms
 Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.
 These words, engraven on a tablet rude,
 Megistias reads; the rest in silence hear.
 ' Yon marble fountain, by Oileus plac'd,
 To thirsty lips in living water flows;
 For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;
 A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,

His dinted shield, his helmet, he resign'd.
O passenger, if, born to noble deeds,
Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,
Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,
And thy decline to hospitable cares.
Rest here ; then seek Oilens in his vale.'

' O Jove,' burst forth Leonidas, ' thy grace
Is large and various. Length of days and bliss
To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,
Nor yet less happy. Grateful, we confess
Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.
Come, let us seek Oilens in his vale.'

The word is given. The heavy phalanx moves.
The light-pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,
Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook
Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,
The fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun
Shot forth his noontide beams. On either side
A surface scarce perceptibly ascends.
Luxuriant vegetation crowds the soil
With trees close rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads
Of native fruitage to the sight reveal
Their vigorous nurture. There the flushing peach,
The apple, citron, almond, pear, and date,
Pomegranates, purple mulberry, and fig,
From interlacing branches mix their hues
And scents, the passenger's delight ; but leave
In the mid vale a pasture long and large,
Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd
By herds, by flocks, innum'rous. Neighbouring knolls
Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs
To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds,
Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name
Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day
Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,
From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd
Th' enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade
A hoary minstrel sat ; the maidens danc'd ;
Flocks bleated ; oxen low'd ; the horses neigh'd ;
With joy the vale resounded ; terror fier'd ;
Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news

By Melibœus, hast'ning to his lord,
Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.
While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd—

‘ In this fair valley old Oileus dwells,
The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state
The public host. Yon large pavilions mark.
They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,
There tell our charge.’ This said, they both advance.
A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd
In rank, in age, superior, wav'd his hand
To Melibœus, standing near, and spake—

‘ By this my faithful messenger I learn
That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot
Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'erest by time,
My sight would scarce distinguish friend or foe,
A Grecian or Barbarian.’ Alpheus then—

‘ We come from Lacedæmon, of our king,
Leonidas, forerunners.’—‘ Is he nigh?’
The cordial senior tenderly exclaims—
‘ I am Oileus. Him a beardless boy
I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years
Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.
But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,
Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.’

They sit. He still discourses—‘ Spartan guests,
In me an aged soldier you behold.
From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,
Oilean Ajax, flows my vital stream,
Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne
The highest functions in the Locrian state,
Not with dishonour. Self-dismiss'd, my age
Hath in this valley, on my own demesne,
Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,
Old magistrates and warriors, like myself,
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd
To rural quiet. Through our last remains
Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,
Recounting past achievements of our prime;
Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds;
Here blest, here blessing, we reside. These flocks,
These herds and pastures, these our num'rous hinds,
And poverty hence exil'd, may divulge

Our generous abundance. We can spread
 A banquet for an army. By the state
 Once more entreated, we accept a charge,
 To age well suited. By our watchful care
 The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.'

He scarce had finish'd when the ensigns broad
 Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale
 Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound
 Of flutes, soft warbling in the expressive mood
 Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,
 In notes of welcome, ev'ry shepherd tun'd
 His sprightly reed. The damsels shew'd their hair,
 Diversify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,
 Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes
 Of amaranths, of jasmín, roses, pinks,
 And violets, they carry, tripping light
 Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars,
 To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.
 Leonidas they chant in sylvan lays,
 Him the defender of their meads and groves,
 Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.
 While Philomela, in her poplar shade,
 Awaken'd, strains her emulating throat,
 And joins, with liquid trills, the swelling sounds.

Behold Oileus and his ancient train
 Accost Laconia's king, whose looks and words
 Confess remembrance of the Loerian chief.

'Thrice hail, Oileus, Sparta's noble host!
 Thou art of old acquainted with her sons,
 Their laws, their manners. Musical as brave,
 Train'd to delight, in smooth Terpander's lay,
 In Aleman's Dorian measure, we enjoy,
 In thy melodious vale, th' unlabour'd strains
 Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd.
 Our heart-felt gladness deems the golden age
 Subsisting where thou govern'st. Still these tones
 Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear!
 Still may this plenty, unmolested, crown
 The favour'd district! may thy reverend dust
 Have peaceful shelter in thy father's tomb!
 Kind Heav'n, that merit to my sword impart.'

By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke—

'Thou dost recall me then! O, sent to guard
 These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from shame,
 Permit thy weary'd soldiers to partake
 Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
 Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.'

The hero, full dignity and years,
 Once bold in action, placed now in ease,
 Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,
 Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,
 With heart-effus'd complacency, the king
 Accepts the lib'ral welcome; while his troops,
 To relaxation and repast dismiss'd,
 Fitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

Still is the ev'ning. Under chesnut shades,
 With interweaving poplars, spacious stands
 A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,
 The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind
 On sage discourse; which thus Oilens clos'd—

'Behold, night lifts her signal, to invoke
 That friendly god who owns the drowsy wand.
 To Mercury this last libation flows.
 Farewell till morn.' They separate, they sleep;
 All but Oilens, who forsakes the tent.
 On Melibœus in these words he calls—

'Approach, my faithful friend.' To him the swain—
 'Thy bondman hears thy call.' The chief replies
 Loud, for the gath'ring peasantry to heed—

'Come, Melibœus, it is surely time
 That my repeated gift, the name of friend,
 Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman wounds
 My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,
 Reject that boon; nor let my feeble head,
 To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,
 Descend, and sleep unthankful in the grave.
 Though yielding nature daily feels decay,
 Thou dost prevent all care. The god's estrange
 Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast
 From weeds, too oft in aged soils profuse,
 From self-tormenting petulance and pride,
 From jealousy and envy at the fame
 Of younger men. Leonidas will dim
 My former lustre, as that silver orb

Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.
O Melibæus, these elect of Jove
To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!
How social, how endearing is their speech!
How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts!
To such a period verging, men like these
Age well may envy, and that envy take
The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span
Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain
Each earthly joy. Till blest Elysium spread
Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores
To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task
To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves
Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,
From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn.
Go, load the groaning axles, nor forget
With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs.
To her a triple change of vestments bear,
With twenty lambs and twenty speckled kids.
Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid
Him, your director, others to select
Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,
Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,
When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.'

They heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil
Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts
A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd
His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.
By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,
He, o'er the busy vale intent, is borne
From place to place; o'erlooks, directs, forgets
That he is old. Meantime the shades of night,
Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives
The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry band
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears.
Oileus greets him. In his radiant car
The senior stays, reluctant; but his guest
So wills, in Spartan reverence to age.
Then spake the Locrian—'To assist thy camp
A chosen band of peasants I detach.
I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;
Nor doubt that swain.' Oileus, speaking, look'd

On Melibœus. 'Skilful he commands
 These hinds. Him wise, him faithful, I have prov'd,
 More than Eumæus to Laertes' son.
 To him th' Oetaean woods, their devious tracks,
 Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass
 Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,
 My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,
 Well exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells
 On Oeta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,
 Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.
 She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend
 An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.
 Now, servants, bring the sacred wine.' Obey'd,
 He, from his seat uprising, thus proceeds—

'Lo! from this chalice a libation pure
 To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,
 To their protector, Eleutherian Jove,
 To his nine daughters, who record the brave,
 To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;
 And take an old man's benediction too.'

He stopt. Affection, struggling in his heart,
 Furst forth again—'Illustrious guest, afford
 Another hour! That slender space of time
 Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,
 Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,
 File through its narrow'd outlet, near my side
 Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.'

The king, well pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the
 steeds

Behind the rear. Oilens grasps his hand,
 Then, in the fulness of his soul, pursues—

'Thy veneration for Laconia's laws
 That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,
 Hear me display the melancholy fruits
 Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains
 Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,
 His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means
 Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince
 Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host,
 And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king
 Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.
 An act of fancy, not habitual grace,

A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom
Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd
To march from Sardis, when with humble tears
The good old man besought him—' Let the king,
Propitious, hear a parent! In thy train
I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,
Thy future vassal, to sustain my age!
The tyrant fell reply'd—' Presumptuous man,
Who art my slave, in this tremendous war
Is not my person hazarded, my race,
My consort? Former merit saves from death
Four of thy offspring. Him so dearly priz'd,
Thy folly hath destroy'd.' His body straight
Was hewn asunder. By the public way
On either side a bleeding half was cast,
And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,
Taught to revere the sanctity of laws,
The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,
His fame with thine. The curses of mankind
Give him renown. He marches to destroy,
But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,
Each eminence is loaded thick with crowds,
From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,
To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.'

Ofttimes the king his decent brow inclin'd,
Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,
Which through th' instructed ear unceasing flow'd,
In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour
Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.
A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile
Of military fame. A trophy large,
Compact with crested morions, targets rude,
With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,
Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,
Of circular expanse; whose bosom shew'd
A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,
And from its centre lifting high to view
A marble chapel, on the massy strength
Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought frieze
Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp
Of obelisks, and busts, and story'd urns,
Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead

Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black
Of yew and cypress. In a serious note
Oileus, pointing, opens new discourse—

‘ Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.
Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd
Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust
He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph
Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,
That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,
By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd.
Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,
The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.
A race more pious on th' Oilean house
Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god
I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan.
Once, on the margin of that silent pool,
In their nocturnal camp, Barbarians lay,
Awaiting morn to violate the dead.
My youth was fir'd. I summon'd, from their cots,
A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan,
Assail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.
He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.
Not one surviv'd the fary of our swains.
Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose,
Of costly blocks constructed; hence that fane,
Inscrib'd to Pan, th' armipotent. O king,
Be to an old man's vanity benign.
This frowning emblem of terrific war
Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.
This, to Barbarian strangers ent'ring Greece,
Shews what I was. The marble fount thou saw'st
Of living water, whose transparent flow
Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,
The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,
Shew what I am; to Grecian neighbours shew
The hospitality of age. O age,
Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,
In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks
Lose the deformity of time? Let siniles
Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth,
Thy feeble steps will find'.....Abruptly here
He paus'd. A manly warrior, full in sight,

Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,
Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd
His rev'rend host—'Thou pausest. Let me ask,
Whom do I see, resembling in his form
A demigod?' In transport then the sage—

'It is my son, discover'd by his shield,
Thy brave auxiliar, Medon! He sustains
My ancient honours in his native state,
Which kindly chose my offspring to replace
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail,
My long and happy course should finish here.'

The chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,
Saluting thus Leonidas—'O king
Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in sight
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill
The spacious Malian plain.' The king replies—

'Accept, illustrious messenger, my thanks.
With such a brave assistant as the son
Of great Oilens, more assur'd I go
'To face those numbers.' With his godlike friend
The father, now dismounting from his car,
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark
They all are wafted to the island fane
Erected by Oilens, and enrich'd
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye
Of Sparta's gen'ral, in extensive scope,
Contemplates each battalion as they wind
Along the pool, whose limpid face reflects
Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.
Them he to Pan armipotent commends,
His favour thus invoking—'God, whose pow'r,
By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice,
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,
Can disarray whole armies, smile on these
Thy worshippers! thy own Arcadians guard!
Through thee Oilens triumph'd. On his son,
On me, look down. Our shields auxiliar join
Against profane Barbarians, who insult
The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall

Of this thy shrine.' He said, and now, intent
To leave the island, on Oilens call'd.

'He,' Medon answer'd, 'by his joy and zeal
Too high transported, and discoursing long,
Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down
Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd
Amid thy pious commerce with the god,
Was silently remov'd. The good old chief
On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,
Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.'

His hast'ning step Leonidas restrains;
Thus fervent prays....' O Maia's son, best pleas'd
When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,
Watch o'er my venerable friend! Thy balm
He wants, exhausted by his love to me.
Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang
Which gen'rous breasts, so parting, must admit.'

He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side
Inviting Medon, he rejoia'd the host.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK III.

The Argument.

Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is received by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Octa. He is answered by Dieneccs and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phruortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phruortes. Epialtes, after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibæus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ, for the defence of another pass in mount Octa.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK III.

NOW in the van Leonidas appears,
With Medon still conferring. ‘ Hast thou heard,’
He said, ‘ among th’ innumerable foes
What chiefs are most distinguish’d ? ’ ‘ Might we trust
To fame,’ reply’d the Locrian, ‘ Xerxes boasts
His ablest, bravest, counsellor and chief,
In Artemisia, Caria’s matchless queen.
To old Darius benefits had bound
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell’d,
Except by magnanimity, she leads
The best appointed squadron of his fleet.
No female softness Artemisia knows,
But in maternal love. Her widow’d hand
With equity and firmness for her son
Administers the sway. Of Doric race
She still retains the spirit, which from Greece
Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs
Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,
Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply’d,
Not less than Demaratus, once her king,
An exile now.’ Leonidas rejoins....

‘ Son of Oileus, like thy father wise,
Like him partake my confidence. Thy words
Recall an era, sadd’ning all my thoughts.
That injur’d Spartan shar’d the regal sway
With one.... Alas ! my brother, eldest born,
Unbless’d by nature, favour’d by no god,
Cleomenes ! Insanity of mind,
Malignant passions, impious acts, deform’d
A life concluded by his own fell hand.
Against his colleague, envious, he suborn’d
Lentychides. Him perjury and fraud

Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held
Unstain'd in lustre.' Here Oileus' son....

' My future service only can repay
Thy confidential friendship. Let us close
The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.'
Each face in transport glows. Now Oeta rear'd
His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps
On rush'd the phalanx, sounding pæans high;
As if the present deity of fame
Had from the summit shewn her dazzling form,
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
Her adamantine trumpet in her hand,
To celebrate their valour. From the van
Leonidas advances, like the sun,
When through dividing clouds his presence stays
Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.
The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan
The air no longer. Motionless their spears.
His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,
Which thus finds utterance from his eager lips....

' All hail, Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs
Presiding here! All hail, ye silvan gods,
Ye fountain nymphs, who send your lucid rills
In broken murmurs down the rugged steep!
Receive us, O benignant, and support
The cause of Greece! Conceal the secret paths
Which o'er these crags, and through these forests, wind,
Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone
By your immortal footsteps! O defend
Your own recesses, nor let impious war
Profane the solemn silence of your groves!
Then on your hills your praises shall you hear
From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving world
That not to undeservers did ye grant
Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,
Now rouse the gen'rous spirit which inflames
Your hearts; exert the vigour of your arms;
That in the bosoms of the brave and free
Your memorable actions may survive;
May sound delightful in the ear of time,
Long as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,

Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops
So near to Heav'n, your monuments of fame!"

As in some torrid region, where the head
Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load,
If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark
Invade the parching ground, a sudden blaze
Sweeps o'er the crackling champaign; through his host,
Not with less swiftness, to the furthest ranks
The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
A more than mortal fervour. Every heart
Distends with thoughts of glory, such as raise
The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire,
When danger, most tremendous in his form,
Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds
Imagination pictures all the scenes
Of war; the purple field, the heaps of dead,
The glitt'ring trophy pier'd with Persian arms.

But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before
Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute
Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, ally'd
To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks;
An ancient warrior. From behind his casque;
Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,
The slender hairs, all silver'd o'er by time,
Flow'd venerably down. He thus began....

'Joy now shall crown the period of my days;
And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep,
Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,
Our common parent, be it as the gods
Shall best determine. For the present hour
I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age
To see the brave Leonidas, and bid
That hero welcome on this glorious shore,
To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.'

Here too the crafty Anaxander spake....
'Of all the Thebans, we, rejoicing, hail
The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call.
O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes
A dark'ning veil extend! or those alone
By fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn
Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was sunk,
Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth.

To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,
The messenger of freedom. O accept
Our grateful hearts! Thon, Alpheus, art the cause
That Anaxander from his native gates
Not single joins this host; nor tamely these,
My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.
Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,
This loftiest part of Oeta. This o'erlooks
The straits, and far beyond their northern mouth
Extends our sight across the Malian plain.
Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,
Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.

Disguis'd in seeming worth, he ended here.
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd.
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue,
His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd
To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe
In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,
Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,
Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came.
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held
How to betray the Spartans, or deject
By consternation. Up the arduous slope
With him each leader to the sunnits climbs.
Thence a tremendous prospect they command,
Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,
Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,
No rock, no promontory, stops the sight,
Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon,
Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb,
Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws
Her rays abroad, to deck in snowy light
The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;
A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king,
Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,
Dissolving all the sacred ties which bind
The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd
The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.
Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes,
The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,
Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd

Around Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd
The vanquish'd east; who o'er the rapid foam
Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad
Of Ganges, sent his formidable name.
Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds
E'er met such numbers; not when Ninus led
Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates
Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd
Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,
The rage of dire Semiramis they bore
Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left
His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.

Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this scene,
Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;
Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes
They traverse; while, in meditation, near
The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all
His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r;
Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudulent tongue
To feign a tale of terror. Truth, herself,
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance,
Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay
Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd
By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live
From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,
He breaks his artful silence. 'Greeks and friends,
Can I behold my native Malian fields,
Presenting hostile millions to your sight,
And not in grief suppress the horrid tale
Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips?
On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;
Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,
A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous waves,
And stemm'd th' impetuous current; while in arms
The universal progeny of men
Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood
By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,
Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files
From Æthiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,
Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength
Of Asia and of Libya. Neptune groan'd
Beneath their number, and, indignant, heav'd

His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain
 The violence of Eurus and the north,
 With rage combin'd, against th' unyielding pile
 Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world
 Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass
 To cover Thracia's regions. They accept
 A Persian lord. They range their hardy race
 Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,
 The brave Thessalian horse, with ev'ry Greek
 Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,
 Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods,
 Who in a moment, by thy will supreme,
 Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,
 Canst raise the weak to safety, oh impart
 Thy instant succour! Interpose thy arm!
 With lightning blast their standards! Oh, confound,
 With triple-bolted thunder, Asia's tents,
 Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour
 An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks!
 Resistance else were vain against a host
 Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond
 That Malian champaign, stretching wide below,
 Beyond the utmost measure of the sight
 From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp
 Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd
 The beds of copious rivers with their thirst;
 Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.'

'Then we shall give them battle in the shade,'
 Ligeiaes reply'd. Not calmly thus
 Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent
 His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,
 Then fierce exclaim'd.... 'Pellona, turn, and view
 With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage
 By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd
 To exercise its horrors! Whet thy teeth,
 Voracious death! All Asia is thy prey.
 Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword,
 For thy insatiate hunger will provide
 Variety of carnage.' He concludes;
 While on the host immense his cloudy brow
 Is fix'd, disdainful, and their strength defies.

Meantime an eastern herald down the pass

Was seen slow-moving tow'rd's the Phocian wall.
 From Asia's monarch delegated, came
 Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
 Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs.
 By them environ'd, in his tent he sits;
 Where thus Tigranes their attention calls....

' Ambassadors from Persia's king, we stand
 Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r
 Of our great master were a needless task.
 The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,
 Invincible, exalted on a throne
 Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd
 To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impress'd
 With awe and low submission. Yet I swear,
 By yon refulgent orb which flames above,
 The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,
 This military throng, this shew of war,
 Well nigh persuade me you have never heard
 That name, at whose commanding sound the banks
 Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,
 Th' Ægyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge,
 Obedient roll. O impotent and rash!
 Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,
 And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind,
 Deign to preserve, resign your arms! Disperse
 All to your cities! There let humblest hands
 With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.'

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs,
 Entwining, crown some eminence with shade,
 The tempests rush sonorous, and between
 The crashing branches roar; by fierce disdain,
 By indignation, thus the Grecians, rous'd,
 In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech.
 But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king
 This brief reply deliver'd from his seat....

' O Persian, when to Xerxes thou return'st,
 Say thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.
 Then say thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,
 Which dares his boasted millions to the field.'

He adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.
 Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
 Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.

In slow solemnity they all proceed,
 And sullen silence; but their looks denote
 Far more than speech could utter. Wrath contracts
 The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
 Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.
 Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd
 The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face
 Of either Persian, arrogance, incens'd
 By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost strait
 They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents
 Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view
 Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart
 Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,
 Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase....

‘ O Arimanius, origin of ill,
 Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r
 Thus with the curse of madness to afflict
 These wretched men? But, since thy dreadful ire
 To irresistible perdition dooms
 The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.
 Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,
 Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood.’

Enrag'd, the stern Diomedon replies....
 ‘ Thou base dependant on a lawless king,
 Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,
 That I beheld the Marathonian field?
 Where, like the Libyan sands before the wind,
 Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears?
 Where thou, perhaps by ignominious flight,
 Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs?
 O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight!
 Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie,
 To dogs a banquet.’ With uplifted palms,
 Tigranes then.... ‘ Omnipotent support
 Of scepter'd Xerxes, Hormazes, hear!
 To thee his first victorious fruits of war
 Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils,
 Which from this Grecian, by the rising dawn,
 In sight of either host, my strength shall rend.’

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake....
 ‘ I too would find, among the Grecian chiefs,
 One who in battle dares abide my lance.’

The gallant youth of Thespia swift reply'd....
 'Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far
 Thou might'st have singled from the ranks of Greece,
 Not one more willing, to essay thy force.
 Yes, I will prove, before the eye of Mars,
 How far the prowess of her meanest chief
 Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.'

This said, the Persians to their king repair;
 Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find
 Each soldier poising his extended spear,
 His weighty buckler bracing on his arm,
 In warlike preparation. Through the files
 Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,
 By exhortation, aids their native warmth.
 Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd,
 Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake....

'What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
 Alas! in vain attempting to confound
 The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,
 See how their bosoms glow. They wish to die;
 They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.
 Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread
 Promiscuous havock round, and Thebans share
 The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass
 Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach
 In our behalf? that Xerxes may be warn'd
 To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;
 When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood
 Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece
 With desolation.' Epialtes here....

'Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?
 Is there a path on Oeta's hills unknown
 To Epialtes? Over trackless rocks,
 Through mazy woods, my secret steps can pass.
 Farewell! I go. Thy merit shall be told
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour;
 When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.'

Meantime a weary, comprehensive care
 To ev'ry part Leonidas extends;
 As in the human frame through ev'ry vein,
 And artery minute, the ruling heart
 Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent

The prudent chief of Locris he consults;
 He summons Melibœus by the voice
 Of Agis. In humility not mean,
 By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,
 Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house
 Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,
 Who gracious spake.... 'The confidence bestow'd,
 The praise by sage Oileus might suffice
 To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,
 Have found thee skilful, active, and discreet.
 Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,
 The upper straits, the Phocian camp, explore.'

'O condescension! Melibœus then,
 'More ornamental to the great than gems,
 A purple robe, or diadem! The king
 Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.
 Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.
 Oileus will rejoice, and, smiling, say
 An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.'

He leads the way, while Agis, following, spake....
 'O swain, distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,
 Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?
 What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house?
 Oileus sure thy liberty would grant,
 Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace;
 When in a station equal to thy worth
 Thou may'st be rank'd.' The prudent hind began....

'In diff'rent stations diff'rent virtues dwell,
 All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great
 In dignity and honours meet reward
 For acts of bounty and heroic toils.
 A servant's merit is obedience, truth,
 Fidelity; his recompense content.
 Be not offended at my words, O chief!
 They, who are free, with envy may behold
 This bondman of Oileus. To his trust,
 His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r,
 From his pure model, could not fail to mould
 What thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,
 Or who my parents, is to me unknown.
 In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.
 They took their price; they hush'd th' atrocious deed.

Dear to Oileus and his race, I thrive ;
And, whether noble or ignoble born,
I am contented, studious of their love
Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire
Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own
To their condition, happy in my lord,
Himself of men most happy.' Agis bland
Rejoins. ' O born with talents to become
A lot more noble, whi h, by thee refus'd,
Thou dost the more deserve ! Laconia's king
Discerns thy merit through its modest veil.
Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.
Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine !
But, should the state demand thee, I foresee
Thou wouldst, like others, in the field excel,
Wouldst share in glory.' Blithe return'd the swain....

' Not ev'ry service is confid'd to arms.
Thou shalt behold me in my present state
Not useless. If the charge Oileus gave
I can accomplish, meriting his praise
And thy esteem, my glory will be full.'

Both pleas'd, in converse thus pursue their way,
Where Oeta lifts her summits huge to heav'n
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd,
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

The Argument.

Tigranes and Phruortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps, in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but, by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot, to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the entrance of the straits, and, surprised at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylae. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chooses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and, on her departure to the Persian camp, is surprised by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Octa.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd.
The ardnous ridge is broken deep in clefts,
Which open channels to pellucid streams,
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame,
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,
Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face
Of this broad champaign, numberless, are pitch'd
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood
To rich Thessalia's confines they extend.
They fill the vallies, late profusely bless'd
In nature's varied beauties. Hostile spears
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.
Pale die her flowrets under barb'rous feet.
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn.
The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades.
The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,
Leave desolate the stream. Elab'rate domes,
To heav'n devoted in recesses green,
Had felt rude force, insensible and blind
To elegance and art. The statues, busts,
The figur'd vases, mutilated, lie,
With chisel'd columns, their engraven frieze,
Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

Yet, unpolluted, is a part reserv'd
In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot
Of Aleanian princes, who, allies
To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There glow
Inviolat the shrubs. There branch the trees,
Sons of the forest. Over downy moss
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,
Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,

To silvan structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,
Enliven'd all, and musical, with birds
Of vocal sweetness, in reluctant plumes
Innumerable various. Lulling talls
Of liquid crystal, from perennial founts,
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,
The noble dames of Persia; here the train
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,
Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,
A tranquil station. Ariana here,
Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung,
Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills
Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair!
All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs
To her sad ear. From flow'rs and florid plants,
To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes,
Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,
Her tender slaves, in harmony, with lutes
Of soothing sound, their warbled voices blend
To charm her sadness. This, the precious part
Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge;
A Satrap, long experienc'd, who presides
O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,
Bold, resolute, and faithful, he commands
The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise
The distant navy, dancing on the foam,
Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,
With Xerxes' tent, august in structure, plac'd
A central object, to attract the eyes
Of subject millions. Thither now resort
Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find
Enclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,
The potentates of Asia. Near his side
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,
His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords!
Their sceptred master from his radiant seat
Looks down, imperious. So the stately tow'r
Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow
With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd
The huge extent of Babylon, with all

Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
This day his banners to unfurl in Greece
The monarch's will decides; but first ordains
That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
Of Horomazes: so the Persians call'd
The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,
The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd the sacred flame
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd,
Who on the hills of Persia, from his cave,
Py flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd
How Horomazes, radiant source of good,
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe
In fruitfulness and beauty: how with stars
By him the heav'ns were spangled: how the sun,
Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light
And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,
Burst from the east at his creating voice;
When, straight beyond the golden verge of day,
Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,
The author foul of evil: how with shades
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works
Of Horomazes: turn'd to noxious heat
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch;
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds:
Whence pestilence and famine: how the pow'r
Of Horomazes in the human breast
Benevolence and equity infus'd,
Truth, temperance, and wisdom, sprung from heav'n:
When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
With falsehood and injustice, with desires
Insatiable, with violence and rage,
Malignity and folly. If the hand
Of Horomazes on precarious life
Shed's wealth and pleasure, swi't th' infernal god
With wild excess or av'rice, blasts the joy.
Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give.
By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms

The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd
 The Hellespont, thou o'er its chafing breast
 The destin'd master of the world didst lead,
 This day his promis'd glories to enjoy :
 When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend ;
 Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall
 Before thy night, and evil be no more.

The Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold,
 From her tall ship, between a double row
 Of naval warriors, while a golden ray
 Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.
 In her enrich'd accoutrements of war,
 The full-wrought buckler and high-crested helm,
 In Caria first devis'd, across the beach
 Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,
 From Taurus hewn, mature in spiry pride,
 Now by the sailor, in its canvas wings,
 Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd,
 On Artemisia's own imperial deck
 Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove
 Of crowded masts surrounding. In her heart
 Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,
 Who fill with impious vanity their king ;
 As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,
 Amid the billows cast a golden chain
 To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe
 Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd
 On her young son, who, pacing near in arms
 Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,
 Look'd up, and waken'd, by repeated smiles,
 Maternal fondness, melting in that eye
 Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat
 At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes,
 Invited ; while in adoration bow'd
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay ;
 Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,
 As from a present deity, too bright
 For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.
 At length, in abject phrase, Tigranes thus....

' O Xerxes, live for ever ! Gracious lord,
 Who dost permit thy servants to approach
 Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess

Thy majesty and radiance! May the pow'r
Of Hormazdes stretch thy regal arm
O'er endless nations, from the Indian shores
To those wide floods which beat Iberian strands,
From northern Tanais to the source of Nile!
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend
Against thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,
Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,
Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They choose
To magnify thy glory by their fall.'

The monarch, turning to his brothers, spake....
' Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe
These tidings? Sure these slaves have never dar'd
To face the Grecians, but delude our ears
With base impostures, which their fear suggests.'

He frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd....
' O from his servants may the king avert
His indignation! Greece was fam'd of old,
For martial spirit and a dauntless breed.
I once have try'd their valour. To my words
Abrocomes can witness. When thy sire
And ours, Darins, to Athenian shores,
With Artaphernes brave and Datis, sent
Our tender youth, at Marathon we found
How weak the hope that numbers could dismay
A foe, resolv'd on victory or death.
Yet not as one contemptible, or base,
Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks
With such persisting courage be endu'd,
Soon as the king shall summon to the field,
He shall behold me in the dang'rous van
Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,
Or sink beneath them.' Xerxes swift rejoind'....

' Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,
With all their nations, doth my potent arm
Extend its sceptre? Wherefore do I sweep
Across the earth with millions in my train?
Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails?
Why all this pow'r, unless th' Almighty's will
Decreed one master to the subject world;
And that the earth's extremity alone
Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd

The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd
 The Hellespontic foam, and taught the sea
 Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more
 That heav'n deserting my imperial cause,
 With courage more than human will inspire
 Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge
 The common fears of nature from their breasts.'

The monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began....
 'The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.
 Incredulous he hears. But time and truth
 Not Horomiz's can arrest. Thy beams
 To instant light'ning, Mythra, may'st thou change
 For my destruction; may th' offended king
 Frown on his servant; cast a loathing eye,
 If the assertion of my lips be false:
 Our further march those Grecians will oppose.'

Amid th' encircling peers Argestes sat,
 A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,
 Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves
 Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,
 Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd
 To this great Satrap. Through the servile court
 Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts
 Of mean submission; none more skill'd to gain
 The royal favour; none who better knew
 The phrase, the look, the gesture, of a slave;
 None more detesting Artemisia's worth;
 By her none more despis'd. His master's eye
 He caught, then spake....' Display thy dazzling state,
 Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide
 Before thy presence her dejected face.'

Last Artemisia, rising stern, began....
 'Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,
 Unprofitably wasting precious hours
 In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,
 Rang'd in defence of that important pass,
 Will fight or fly? A question by the sword
 To be decided. Still to narrow straits,
 By land, by sea, thy council hath confin'd
 Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak,

Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith
 Repus'd thy navy. But, whate'er thy will,
 Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
 The difference see, by trial in the field,
 Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve
 These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.
 The future stage of war thyself explore.
 Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
 That such a foe to splendour will submit,
 Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide
 Thy mail, Argestes. Not in silken robes,
 Not as in council with an oily tongue,
 But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,
 Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.'

The king arose. 'No more. Prepare my car.
 The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.
 We will ourselves advance to view the foe.'

The monarch will'd, and suddenly he heard
 His trampling horses. High on silver wheels
 The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone,
 Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,
 The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush,
 The flaming topaz with its golden beam,
 The pearl, th' empurpled amethyst, and all
 The various gems, which India's mines afford
 To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold
 A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd
 His stately neck, and o'er the royal head
 Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight generous steeds,
 Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd
 In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.
 Not those of old to Hercules refus'd
 By false Laomedon; nor they which bore
 The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear
 Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vie
 In strength or beauty. In obedient pride
 They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air
 They toss their foreheads. On their glist'ning chests
 The silver manes disport. The king ascends.
 Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.
 The charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,
 Strong Patirampes. At the signal bound

Th' attentive steeds; the chariot flies; behind,
Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.
Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain
Of vast expansion, in battalia wait
The eastern bands. To these th' imperial wheels,
By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,
Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son
With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach
Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.
He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host
Roll back by nations, and admit their lord,
With all his Satraps. As from crystal domes,
Built underneath an arch of pendant seas,
When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the floods,
With each ærulean deity ascends,
Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep
Divides its bosom to th' emerging god:
So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,
On either side receding: when, as down
Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost,
A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,
While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;
That, soon as time a hundred years had told,
Not one among those millions should survive.
Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud?
Was it that once humanity could touch
A tyrant's breast? Or rather did thy soul
Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought
That all thy pow'r was mortal? But the veil
Of sadness soon forsook his bright'ning eye,
As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,
And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.
Elate, the mingled prospect he surveys
Of glitt'ring files, unnumber'd; chariots, scyth'd,
On thund'ring axles roll'd; and haughty steeds,
In sumptuous trappings clad; Barbaric pomp!
While gorgeous banners to the sun expand
Their streaming volumes of relucant gold,
Pre-eminent, amidst tiaras gemm'd,
Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears
In number equal to the bladed grass,
Whose living green in vernal bearty clothes

Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse
Can to the mind present th' amazing scene?
Not thee, whom ruinour's fabling voice delights,
Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;
But thou, historic truth, support my song,
Which shall the various multitude display,
Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

The Persians first in scaly corselets shone;
A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy
The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,
Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength
Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd
The victor's head above his country's laws.
Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth;
Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,
To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,
To dart the javelin; but, untaught to form
The ranks of war, with unconnected force,
With ineffectual fortitude, they rush'd,
As on a fence of adamant, to pierce
Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,
And osier-woven targets, they oppos'd
To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields.
On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,
Impenetrable. With golden gloss
Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins
Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,
Well-furnish'd quivers on their shoulders, hung,
And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.
Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,
The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once
From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.
Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd.
The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,
And white with lilies, water'd by the floods
Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave
The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings.
All other streams the royal lip disdains.
Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,
Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,
To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,

Bent by its foodful burdens, sheds, unrep'd,
 Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil
 With future harvests; whilst in ev'ry wood
 Their precious labours on the loaden boughs
 The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons
 Display their brazen casques, unskillful work
 Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,
 O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks,
 Within the mighty Babylonian gates,
 They dwell; and where, still mightier once in sway,
 Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat
 Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldaea joins,
 The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide
 There Belus first discern'd the various course
 Of heav'n's bright planets, and the clust'ring stars,
 With names distinguish'd; whence himself was deem'd
 The first of gods. His sky-ascending fame
 In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.
 Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,
 The Bactrians stood, and, rough in skins of goats,
 The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks,
 From barren mountains, from the joyless coast
 Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,
 Their scymetars upheld, and caky bows.
 The Indian tribes a threefold hold compose.
 Part guide the courser, part the rapid car;
 The rest on foot within the bending cane,
 For slaughter, fix the iron-pointed reed.
 They, o'er the Indus from the distant verge
 Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd
 By lavish nature. There the season bland
 Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,
 The cinnamon, the spikenard, bless their fields.
 Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines.
 His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,
 Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with gems.
 Such were the nations who to Xerxes sent
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.

Now, Muse, recite what multitudes obscur'd
 The plain on foot, or elevated high,
 On martial axes or on camels, beat
 The loosen'd mould. The Parthians first appear,

Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,
From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.
Near them the Segdians, Dadices, arrange,
Gandarians and Chorasmians. Sacian throngs
From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,
From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,
A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
To fury prone, their deserts they forsook.
A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous axe,
The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque
O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.
In arms like Persians, the Saranges stood.
High as their knees, the shapely buskins clung
Around their legs. Magnificent they trod,
In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen
The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,
In skins of goats rude vested. But in spoils
Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards,
The graceful range of Æthiopians shews
An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.
Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,
And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song
Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,
As foes to virtue. From their seat remote,
On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound,
Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
These friends of hospitality and peace,
Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war
Against a land, whose climate and whose name
To them were strange. With hardest stone they point
The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,
Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,
They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd
With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd
From where Carambis, with projected brows,
O'erlooks the dusky Enxine, wrapt in mists;
From where, through flow'rs which paint his vary'd banks,
Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed;
The Matienians, Mariandenians, next;
To them the Syrian multitudes, who range
Among the cedars on the shaded ridge
Of Libanus; who cultivate the glebe,

Wide-water'd by Orontes; who reside
Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms
The foodful date, which clusters on the plains
Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name
Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,
With those who gather from the fragrant shrub
The aromatic balsam, and extract
Its milky juice along the lovely side
Of Jordan, winding, till, immers'd, he sleeps
Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures
Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance;
To them their ancient colony are join'd,
Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts
Of strong Euphrate cleave the yielding earth,
Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;
Whence, with collected waters, fierce and deep,
His passage rending through diminish'd rocks,
To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream
Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides;
He stealing imperceptibly, sustains
The green profusion of Armenia's meads.

Now, strange to view, in similar attire,
But far unlike in manners, to the Greeks,
Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport
Were all their care. Beside Cæster's brink,
Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by;
Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines
Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide
Of golden-sanded Hermus, they allure
The sight, enchanted by the graceful dance;
Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,
And melt to softest languishment the soul.
What to the field of danger could incite
These tender sons of luxury? The lash
Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs
Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,
And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile,
Conjoining Asia and the western world.
To them Mæonia, hot with sulph'rous mines,
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
Unbless'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil;
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd

By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.
Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests
A sword is girt; and hairy hides compose
Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left
Olympus wood-envelop'd; left the meads
Wash'd by Caiens, and the baneful tide
Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance
An ancient nation, who in early times,
By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land
Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchange'd
Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours
A freezing current, for the distant flood
Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,
Their habitation to the sacred feet
Of Dindimus extend. Yet there they groan
Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon, lost.
The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.
Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon.
A vest embrac'd their bodies; while abroad,
Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.
But other Thracians, who their former name
Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,
With horns of bulls, in imitating brass,
Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth
Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,
A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still
On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,
Their huge array discov'ring, swell his soul
With more than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands
Of Moschians and Macronians now appear;
The Mosynœcians, who, on berries ted,
In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic sands
Repose their painted limbs. The mirthful race
Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds
Delight in play and laughter. Then advance,
In garments buckled on their spacious chests,
A people destin'd in eternal verse,
Ev'n thine, sublime Mœonides, to live.
These are the Milyans; Solymi their name
In thy celestial strains; Pisidia's hills
Their dwelling. Once a formidable train,

They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war:
Now, doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
Themselves unnerv'd by thralldom, they must leave
Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.
The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,
Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,
A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil
Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot,
Which from the wild emerges like an isle,
Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines
Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice which scorns
The injuries of time: yet nature's hand
Had sown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd
Their desert hills with veins of sapphires blue,
Which on the turban shine. On ev'ry neck
The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.
The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,
Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small.
Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood;
Their lances short; of hides undress'd their shields.
The Colchians march'd from Phasis; from the strand
Where once Medea, fair enchantress, stood,
And, wond'ring, view'd the first advent'rous keel
Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side
The demigods descended. They repair'd
To her fell sire's inhospitable hall.
His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd:
With ev'ry art of eloquence divine
He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard;
She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd:
Then to the hero she resigns her heart.
Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.
She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main
He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,
The destin'd victim of his treach'rous vows.
The hostile Colchians then pursu'd their flight
In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,
Or to recal the long-forgotten wrong,
Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece
With desolation. Next in Median garb
A crowd appear'd, who left the peopled isles
In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia strewn.

Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,
 From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung;
 Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood
 Around Casiti's verge. For battle range
 Those who reside where, all beset with palms,
 Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king,
 Who nam'd of old the Erythraean main.
 On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd
 In skins terrific, brandishing their darts
 Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.
 Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway
 Could hide her sons; much less could freedom dwell
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields;
 Where spicy cassia, where the fragrant reed,
 Where myrrh and hallow'd frankincense, perfume
 The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size
 Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest
 Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.
 Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs
 Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.

Such were the numbers which, from Asia led,
 In base prostration bow'd before the wheels
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
 The Malian sand o'ershadow? Forward rolls
 The regal car through nations, who in arms,
 In order'd ranks, unlike the orient tribes,
 Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught
 To bend the servile knee, erect they stood;
 Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight
 Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,
 Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons
 Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force
 Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,
 The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;
 Here, on his steed, the brave Thessalian frown'd;
 There pin'd reluctant multitudes of Greece,
 Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd
 Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.

Through all the nations, who ador'd his pride
 Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd;
 Nor yet among those millions could be found
 One, who in beauteous features might compare.

Or tow'ring size, with Xerxes. O! possess'd
 Of all but virtue, doom'd to shew how mean,
 How weak, without her is unbounded pow'r!
 The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,
 How insecure of happiness! how vain!
 Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by heav'n
 From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves
 Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;
 Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain,
 Becomes at last a soothing hope to all:
 Thou, who couldst weep that nature's gentle hand
 Should lay her weary'd off-spring in the tomb;
 Yet couldst, remorseless, from their peaceful seats
 Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride,
 To famine, plague, and massacre a prey;
 What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?
 What suff'rings, to compensate for the tears
 Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
 For all this waste of nature? On his host
 Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight,
 To Demaratus then directs his voice....

‘ My father, great Darins, to thy mind
 Recall, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd
 Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home.
 My favour too remember. To beguile
 Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth,
 Would ill become thee. With consid'rate eyes
 Look back on these battalions. Now declare
 If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.’

To him the exile.... ‘ Deem not, mighty lord,
 I will deceive thy goodness by a tale
 To give them glory who degraded mine.
 Nor be the king offended while I use
 The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly.’

Contemptuous smil'd the monarch, and resum'd....
 ‘ Wilt thou, in Lacedaemon once supreme,
 Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks
 In greater disproportion must engage
 Our host to-morrow.’ Demaratus then....

‘ By single combat were the trial vain
 To shew the pow'r of well-united force,
 Which oft by military skill surmounts

The weight of numbers. Prince, the difference learn
Between thy warriors and the sons of Greece.
The flow'r, the safeguard, of thy num'rous camp
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls;
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak
By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes
Observe not how the flocks and heifers feed.
To them, of wealth, of all possessions, void,
The name of country with an empty sound
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt,
From misery, debauchery, and sloth,
Are these to battle drawn against a foe
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil,
Wont through the freezing show'r, the wintry storm,
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow,
Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves;
Whence on himself, on her whose faithful arms
Infold him joyful, on a growing race
Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows
With independence. When to battle call'd,
For them, his dearest comfort, and his care,
And for the harvest promis'd to his toil,
He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force.
Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece.
One only yields a breed more warlike still,
Of whom selected bands appear in sight,
All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe
Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf.
They are devoted to severer tasks,
For war alone, their sole delight and care.
From infancy to manhood they are train'd
To winter watches, to inclement skies,
To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,

To arms and wounds ; a discipline of pain
 So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp,
 With all its hardships, is a seat of rest,
 And war itself remission from their toil.'

' Thy words are folly,' with redoubled scorn
 Returns the monarch. ' Doth not freedom dwell
 Among the Spartans? Therefore will they shun
 Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free
 Will fly from danger ; while my vassals, born
 To absolute controulment from their king,
 Know, if th' allotted station they desert,
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.'

To this the exile....' O conceive not, prince,
 That Spartans want an object where to fix
 Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread.
 To them more awful, than the name of king
 To Asia's trembling millions, is the law ;
 Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront
 Unnumber'd foes ; to vanquish, or to die.'
 Here Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts.

Its long defile Thermopylæ presents.
 The Satraps leave their cars. On foot they form
 A splendid orb around their lord. By chance
 'The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.
 They, in a martial exercise employ'd,
 Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train ;
 But poise the spear, protended, as in fight ;
 Or lift their adverse shields in single strife ;
 Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel
 In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet :
 While others, calm, beneath their polish'd helms
 Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls
 O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here
 'The exile questions....' What do these intend,
 Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair ?

To whom the Spartan....' O imperial lord,
 Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,
 When full determin'd to encounter death.
 Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel ;
 Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man,
 All who possess the regions unexplor'd
 Beyond the Ganges, all whose wand'ring steps

Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild,
 With those who drink the secret fount of Nile;
 Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay
 Remain a stranger.' Fervour from his lips
 Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,
 Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside
 His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.
 The keen remembrance of his former state,
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,
 Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks
 Review the godlike warriors, who beneath
 His standard once victorious fought; who call'd
 Him once their king, their leader: then again,
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears
 His rev'rend beard; in agony bemoans
 His faded honours, his illustrious name,
 Forgotten long, his majesty, defil'd
 By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd
 By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,
 Some princely palace, or stupendous fane,
 Magnificent in ruin, nods; where time
 From under shelving architraves hath mow'd
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd
 Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own
 He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane....

' O Demaratus, in this grief I see
 How just thy praises of Laconia's state.
 Though cherish'd here with universal love,
 Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,
 Howe'er averse to thine. But swift relief
 From indignation borrow. Call to mind
 Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune bless,
 Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,
 To peace, to honour, in the Persian court.'

As Demaratus, with a grateful mind,
 His answer was preparing, Persia's king
 Stern interrupted.... ' Soon as morning shines,
 Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head
 The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians bound.'

This said, the monarch to his camp returns.
Th' attendant princes reascend their cars,
Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen
Detain'd, who thus begun.... 'Impartial, brave,
Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart
To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal.
Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands
These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate there?
Why not command the mountains to remove,
Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,
Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die
My gratitude instructs me in the cause
Of our imperial master. To succeed
Is not within the shadow of my hopes
At this dire pass. What evil genius sways?
Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest,
In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd -
My dictates, oft repeated in despite
Of purpled flatterers, to embark a force,
Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine
These sons of valour to their own defence.
Vain are my words. The royal ear admits
Their sound alone; while adulation's notes
In Siren sweetness penetrate his heart,
There lodge ensnaring mischief.' In a sigh
To her the prince.... 'O faithful to thy lord,
Discreet adviser, and in action firm,
What can I answer? My afflicted soul
Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.
Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,
Mayst magnify our danger. Let me hope,
Whate'er the danger; if extreme, believe
That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed
Not with less zeal than Spartans for their laws.'

They separate. To Xerxes he repairs.
The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard,
Stays, and retraces with sagacious ken
The destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,
Its depth, its confines, both of hill and sea.
Meantime a scene more splendid hath allur'd
Her son's attention. His transported sight,
With ecstasy like worship, long pursues

The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,
Which shew'd their idol to the nations round,
The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,
The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites
Her care, express'd in these pathetic strains....

' Look on the king with gratitude. His sire
Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.
By loyalty inflexible repay
The obligation. To immortal pow'rs
The adoration of thy soul confine ;
And look undazzled on the pomp of man,
Most weak when highest. Then the jealous gods
Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,
His chambers, fill with flattery's pois'nous swarms,
Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,
Consumes the health of kingdoms.' Here the boy,
By an attention which surpass'd his years,
Unlocks her inmost bosom. ' Thrice accurs'd
Be those, th' indignant heroine pursues,
' Those, who have tempted their imperial lord
To that prepost'rous arrogance, which cast
Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
Chastis'd with stripes in heav'n's offended sight
The Hellespont, and fondly now demands
The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight,
Train'd by my care to equitable sway,
And imitation of the gods, by deeds
To merit their protection, heed my voice.
They, who alone can tame or swell the floods,
Compose the winds, or guide their strong career,
O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound
Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet
Their indignation hath already fall'n.
Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd
A prey for death, to vindicate their pow'r.'

This said, a curious search in ev'ry part
Her eye renews. Adjoining to the straits,
Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs,
A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards
Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.
Held back, they yield a passage to the queen

And princely boy. Delicious to their sight,
Soft dales, meand'ring, shew their flow'ry laps
Among rude piles of nature. In their sides
Of rock are mansions hewn; nor laden trees
Of cluster'd fruit are wanting: but no sound,
Except of brooks in murmur, and the song
Of winged warblers, meets the list'ning ear.
No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form,
Is seen; no careful husband at his toil;
Beside her threshold no industrious wife,
No playful child. Instructive to her son
The princess then.... 'Already these abodes
Are desolate. Once happy in their homes,
Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene
Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Murs
Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs,
And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits,
Unripe; will deafen, with his clangour fell,
Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,
Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,
Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here.
Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust
To Demaratus; while thy mother tries,
With these her martial followers, what sparks,
Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame
Their sons and daughters in a stern debate
With other Dorians, who have never breath'd
The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks
Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight
Were too severe a lesson. Thou might'st bleed
Among the thousands fated to expire
By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,
Ye all-disposing rulers, but protect
Her son.' She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns
Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,
And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,
Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.

Now slowly tow'rd's the Persian camp her steps
In silence she directed; when a voice,
Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd

To none but feather'd passengers of air,
By this reproof detain'd her....' Caria's queen
Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd;
Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste,
Thou homager of tyrants?' Upward gaz'd
Th' astonish'd princess. Lo! a female shape,
Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge
Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound
Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept
Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear
Between her eyelids glean'd. 'Too true,' she sigh'd,
'A homager of tyrants! Voice austere,
And presence half-divine!' Again the voice....

'O Artemisia, hide thy Doric sword.
Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,
Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wise,
Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons enthrall.'

The queen made no reply. Her breastplate heav'd.
The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail
Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd....

'Olympian thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill,
Of sacred oaths remind me!' Then aside
She turns, to shun that majesty of form,
In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts
She feels. A painful conflict she endures,
With recollection of her Doric race;
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.
Her royal benefactor she recalls,
Back to his sight precipitates her steps.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

The Argument.

Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence which Agis and Melibæus bring from the upper pass; then commands a body of Arcadians, with the Plateans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle under the conduct of Demophilus in that part of Thermopylæ which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repulsed by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery; but, pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulture.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.
With Melibæus Agis, now return'd,
Address'd the king.... ' Along the mountain's side
We bent our journey. On our way a voice,
Loud from a crag, on Melibæus call'd.
He look'd and answer'd. Mycon, ancient friend!
Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to-day;
But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,
Inhabitant of Oeta from thy birth,
Can furnish that intelligence which Greece
Wants for her safety. Mycon shew'd a track.
We mounted high. The summit, where we stopt,
Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,
O'er dales, and forests, rocks, and dashing floods
In cataracts. The object of our search
Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,
Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.
We thence descended to the Phocian camp,
Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread
In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs
Were hung, in snowy folds, a thousand tents,
Containing each a Phocian, heavy-mail'd,
With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends
The vale, contracted to that narrow strait
Which first we saw with Mycon.' ' Prudent care
Like yours alleviates mine,' well-pleas'd, the king
Reply'd. ' Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands
Select a thousand spears. To them unite
The Thespians and Plataeans. Draw their lines
Beneath the wall which fortifies the pass.
There, close-embodiy'd, will their might repulse
The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.

Approv'd in martial service, him I name
 The chief supreme.' Obedient to his will,
 Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents,
 Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.
 So round their monarch, in his stormy hall,
 The winds assemble. From his dusky throne
 His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims
 To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform,
 Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
 Laconia's leader, from the rampart's height,
 To battle thus the list'ning host inflames....

' This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends,
 Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,
 Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,
 Demand your swords. You, gen'rous, active, brave,
 Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
 Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,
 In war unskillful, nature's basest dross,
 And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
 Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
 By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause.
 Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
 They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares.
 Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,
 Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd
 Forc'd from their homes; a populace in peace
 By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
 Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief
 To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns,
 Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine
 In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds
 The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.
 Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance,
 Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present
 The mockery of war....But ev'ry eye
 Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
 Go then, ye sons of liberty; go, sweep
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless, rend
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,

The warrior's helm profaning. Think the shades
Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows,
Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.'

He spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.
In fierce reply, Barbarian shouts ascend
From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.
Such is the roar of *Ætna*, when his mouth
Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths,
To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood
In deep array, before the Phocian wall
The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,
And spears protended; like the graceful range
Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs
Before some rural palace wide expand
Their venerable umbrage, to retard
The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main
In lucid rows, the rising waves reflect
The sun's effulgence; so the Grecian helms
Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd
A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.

Down rush the foes. Exulting, in their van
Their haughty leader shakes his threat'ning lance,
Provoking battle. Instant from his rank
Diomedon bursts furious. On he strides;
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies....

'Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command
Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.'

Tigranes, turning to the Persians, spake....
'My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste,
While my strong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.'

He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon
Each combatant advanc'd. Their sinewy hands
Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. They thrice
drove,

With well directed force, the pointed steel
At either's throat, and thrice their weary shields
Repel'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief
At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.
Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns
Approaching fate; then all his martial skill

Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths.
The blade descending on Tigranes' arm,
That instant struggling to redeem his lance,
The nervous hand dissevers. Pale affright
Unmans the Persian; while his active foe
Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,
Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.
Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.
His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides;
Then, in a tuft of blood-distilling hair
His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk
The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength
Among the adverse legions. All in dread
Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew
In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track
Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,
A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn
Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high
A meteor, waving its portentous fires;
Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams,
Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,
Dispersing plague and desolation round.
Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd
Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze
The heart of Persia; then, with haughty pace,
In sullen joy, among his gladsome friends
Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng,
In consternation motionless, suspend
The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms:

'Heav'n! can one leader's fate appal this host,
Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?
Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge
I draw my subject files. My hardy toil
Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd
The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand
Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.
So through this field of slaughter will I chase
Yon vaunting Greek.' His ardent words revive
Declining valour in the van. His lance
Then in the rear he brandishes. The crowd,
Before his threat'ning ire affrighted, roll

Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.
 Thus, with his trident, ocean's angry god
 From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass
 Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach.

Tremendous frown'd the fierce Plataean chief,
 Full in the battle's front. His ample shield,
 Like a strong bulwark, prominent he rais'd
 Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm
 Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train
 In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.
 Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,
 Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,
 Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon
 Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest
 The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host
 Shrank back, as blasted by the piercing beams
 Of that unconquerable sword which fell
 With lightning's swiftness on dissever'd helms,
 And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all,
 Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,
 Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd
 With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends....

' O Dithyrambus, let thy deeds this day
 Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms,
 Deinophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.
 Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.
 Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame
 Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand
 To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow.'

As, when endu'd with Promethéan heat,
 The molten clay respir'd, a sudden warmth
 Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;
 In ev'ry sinew new-born vigour swells.
 His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm,
 The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war
 Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates
 He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.
 Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,
 His martial brothers. They attend his fate,
 By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary sire
 Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;
 Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse

Ambition's fury, and the lust of war ;
Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave.

Next, by the fierce Plataean's fatal sword,
Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend
Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight,
He left his native hands. Of Syrian birth,
In Daphné he resided, near the grove
Whose hospitable laurels, in their shade,
Conceal'd the virgin fugitive, averse
To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd,
Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,
Herself a laurel, chang'd her golden hair
To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove
Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,
Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrus, and with rills
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,
The happy rival of Thessalia's vale ;
Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.

Demophilus, wise leader, soon improves
Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,
In age his equals, to condense the files,
To rivet close their bucklers, he commands.
As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,
But well compacted, when a fav'ring gale
Invites the skilful master to expand
The sails at large, her slow but steady course
Impels through myriads of dividing waves ;
So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs
The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons
Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd
The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,
Crush'd, like vile stubble underneath the steps
Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields
Of new-shorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout
Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd....

‘ Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.
Yet, single, here my target shall oppose
The shock of thousands.’ Raging, he impels
His deathful point through Aristander's breast.
Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A sacred bard,

Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,
He sung the deeds of heroes; those who fell,
Or those who conquer'd, in their country's cause;
Th' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love
Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain
The Muses favour'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,
And bless'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.
No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend
The shady steep of Helicon; no more
The stream divine of Aganippe's fount
Bedew his lip, harmonious; nor his hands,
Which, dying, grasp the unforsaken lance,
And prostrate buckler, ever more accord
His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.
Lo! Dithyrambus weeps! Amid the rage
Of war and conquest, swiftly-gushing tears
Find one sad moment's interval to fall
On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves
His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd,
His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest;
Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd
From ancestors who sway'd in Ninus old
Th' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne
A tributary satrap, rul'd the vales
Where Tigris swift, between the parted hills
Of tall Niphates, drew his foamy tide,
Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,
Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes
Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

Beyond the Malian entrance of the straits
Th' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd till felt,
Spring, from concealment in a thicket deep,
New swarms of warriors, clust'ring on the flank
Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rd's the bay
They shrink. They totter on the fearful edge,
Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,
The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk
Beneath the chieftain of th' assailing band
Falls prostrate. Thespians and Platæans wave
Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes
Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.
Dire is the shock. What less than Caria's queen,

In their career of victory, could check
Such warriors? Fierce she struggles; while the rout
Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp
Contagious terror? thence no succour flows.
Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band
At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit
He leaves to others, like th' almighty sire,
Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods,
His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,
And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth
Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding crowd,
Plataea's chief and Dithyrambus range,
Triumphant, side by side. Thus o'er the field
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,
Two gen'rous coursers, link'd in mutual reins,
In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal.
Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,
They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen
Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans
Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs
She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs.
A troop she rallies. Goddess-like, she turns,
Not less than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.
Whole ranks she covers, like th' imperial bird,
Extending o'er a nest of callow young
Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak,
Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent hand,
From common fives refraining, hastes to snatch
More splendid laurels from that nobler head.
His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears
Her buckler down; thence glancing, cuts the thong
Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence
Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose
A female warrior; one, whose summer pride
Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,
Yet by th' heroic character supply'd,
Which grew more awful, as the touch of time
Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,
Unman'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,
Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands

Full on his crest discharge the furious blade.
The forceful blow compels him to recede
Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.
His soldiers flock around him. From a scene
Of blood more distant speeds Plataea's chief.
The fair occasion of suspended fight
She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,
And saves her Carian remnant. While his friend
In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake....

'If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.
Be all thy trophies, be my own, accurs'd.'

The youth, recover'd, answers in a smile....
'I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.
Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.
Let us prevent his call.' This said, their steps
They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps
Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore
Distain'd; like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd
By some lone-wand'ring traveler, then, dy'd
In human crimson, through the forest deep
Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

Stern Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,
Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look
She casts around. Abrocomes remote
With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.
She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,
Who from battalions numberless had spar'd
Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd
With her distress. Her anger now augments.
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.
He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat
High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm;
Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,
Wild, but majestic, like the waving boughs
Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield
With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen,
All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds,
Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword,
To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks....

Behold these mangled Carians, who have spent
 Their vital current in the king's defence,
 Ev'n in his sight ; while Medes and Cissians fled,
 By these protected, whom Argestes saw
 Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,
 Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling sire,
 Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove,
 To thee appealing, of the king I claim
 A day, for justice. Monarch, to my arm
 Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth
 Chastise his treason.' With an eye submiss,
 A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone,
 To cheat the king, to moderate her ire,
 Argestes utters these fallacious words....

' May Horomazes leave the fiend at large
 To blast my earthly happiness, confine
 Amid the horrors of his own abode
 My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge
 Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint,
 My sole restraint ! To him our all is due ;
 Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd !
 His preservation I prefer to fame,
 And bright occasion for immortal deeds
 Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword,
 Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen
 Among the foremost blazing. Lo ! the king
 A royal present will on thee bestow,
 Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,
 A golden wreath to each survivor brave.'

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'rer's spell
 Deluded, languid through dismay and shame
 At his defeat, the monarch for a time
 Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips....

' Thou hear'st, great princess. Rest content. His words
 I ratify. Yet, farther, I proclaim
 Thee of my train first counsellor and chief.'

' O eagle-ey'd discernment in the king !
 O wisdom equal to his boundless power !'
 The purpled sycophant exclaims. ' Thou seest
 Her matchless talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,
 The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,
 Foil'd in her absence, in her conduct safe.

Thy penetrating sight directs the field;
There let her worth be hazarded no more.'

'Thy words are wise,' the blinded prince rejoins.

'Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.'

Thus, to remove her from the royal ear,
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage
Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees,
And calms the storm, by rend'ring up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her son, belov'd,
Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus....

'O Artemisia, of the king's command
Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends
Immediate care, far other than revenge,
Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest
Among those cliffs, the eagle's rapid flight
Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead.
Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,
For honourable sepulchres prepare,
Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.
I will assist thee. Xerxes will intrust
To my command a chosen guard of horse.'

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercast
The night with double darkness, only pierc'd
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,
The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,
Refines the troubled air; the blast is mute;
Death-pointed flames disperse; and placid Jove
Looks down in smiles: so prudence from the lips
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,
His aspect strength'ning smooth persuasion's flow,
Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs.
The king assigns a thousand horse to guard
Th' illustrious exile and heroic dame.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

The Argument.

The Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of mount Octa. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oileus, she intrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deputes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces first engaged, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Plataeans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylae, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Plataeans, Mantineans, Tegaens, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasians, and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light armed troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oileus. Dieneces commands the whole.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

NOW Dithyrambus and Plataea's chief,
Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd
Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield,
Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.
To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth,
Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd....

‘Liv’st thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,
From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows
Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic’d,
When fortune bless’d with victory my arm,
Than now to raise thee from this field of death.’

His languid eyes the dying prince unclos’d,
Then with expiring voice.... ‘Vain man, forbear
To proffer me what soon thyself must crave.
The day is quite extinguish’d in these orbs.
One moment fate allows me to disdain
Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.’

This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.
So shoots a meteor’s transitory gleam
Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds,
Then dissipates for ever. O’er the corse
His rev’rend face Demophilus inclin’d,
Pois’d on his lance, and thus address’d the slain....

‘Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,
Had justice brac’d the buckler on thy arm,
And to preserve a people bade thee die!
Who now shall mourn thee? Thy ungrateful king
Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land
May raise an empty monument, but feel
No public sorrow. Thy recorded name
Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs
For their lost hero. What to them avail’d
Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard

Their wives, their offspring, from th' oppressor's hand,
 But to extend oppression, didst thou fall,
 Perhaps, with inborn virtues in thy soul,
 Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,
 By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.
 All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws
 To no selected race of men confine
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all
 The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone
 They bloom, they flourish; while oppression blasts
 The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,
 False honour, savage valour, taint the soul,
 And wild ambition: hence rapacious pow'r
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave,
 A feast for dogs, th' ensanguin'd field bestrew.'

He said. Around the venerable man
 The warriors throng'd, attentive. Conquest hush'd
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,
 Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm.
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew
 To Hebrus' margin, from their dreary seats,
 The savage breed which Hæmus, wrapt in clouds,
 Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows,
 In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain
 Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,
 Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd
 The sacred laws of justice, which the bard
 Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

Meantime th' Arcadians, with inverted arms
 And banners, sad and solemn, on their shields
 The giant limbs of Clonius bore along,
 To spread a gen'ral wo. The noble corse,
 Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by
 To those last honours which the dead partake,
 Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye
 Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;
 Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd
 Intent, and spake.... 'My heart retains thy words.
 This hour may witness how rapacious pow'r

The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.
But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire
A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd
Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood, still warm,
May lie forgotten by his thankless king;
Yet not by me neglected shall remain
A naked corse.' The good old man replies....

' My gen'rous child, deserving that success
Thy arm hath gain'd! When vital breath is fled,
Our friends, our foes, are equal dust. Both claim
The fun'ral passage to that future seat
Of being, where no enmity revives.
There Greek and Persian will together quaff
In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss
Immortal. Him, thy valour slew on earth,
In that bless'd region thou mayst find a friend.'

This said, the ready Thespians he commands
To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,
Th' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd, on targets broad,
Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane,
He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A cave, not distant from the Phocian wall,
Through Oeta's cloven side, had nature form'd,
In spacious windings. This in moss she clad;
O'er half the entrance, downward from the roots,
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth
Relucent laurels spread before the sun
A broad and vivid foliage. High above
The lill was darken'd by a solemn shade,
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave
Diomedon, Demophilus resort,
And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,
Cool as the azure grot where Thetis sleeps
Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds
Of waters, trilling from the riven stone
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,
In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,
Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirst,
To this retreat serene. Against the sides
Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields;
The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks;

Propt on their spears, they rest: when Agis brings
From Lacedæmon's leader these commands....

‘Leonidas recalls you from your toils,
Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd
The first bright harvest on the field of fame.
Our eyes in wonder, from the Phocian wall,
On your unequal'd deeds incessant gaz'd.’

To whom Plataea's chief....‘Go, Agis, say
To Lacedæmon's ruler, that, untir'd,
Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,
Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.
Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,
Shall not this early sun again behold
The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,
Should they adventure on a fresh assault?’

To him the Thespian youth....‘My friend, my guide
To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart,
Intent on fame, disdains to rest, O grant
I too thy glorious labours may partake,
May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.
Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat
Not to command us from the field of war.’

‘Yes, persevering heroes,’ he reply'd,
‘I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
Not to command you from the field of war.’

Then interpos'd Demophilus....‘O friend,
Who lead'st to conquest brave Plataea's sons;
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man,
Who dost restore a brother to my eyes;
My soul your magnanimity applauds:
But, O reflect that unabating toil
Subdues the mightiest! Valour will repine
When the weak hand obeys the heart no more.
Yet I declining through the weight of years,
Will not assign a measure to your strength.
If still you find your vigour undecay'd,
Stay, and augment your glory. So, when time
Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside,
When in the temples your enfeebled arms
Have hung their consecrated shields, the land
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,
Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,

Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime.'
 So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.
 But from the fount Diomedon receives
 Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,
 Addressing thus the genius of the stream....

' Whoe'er thou art, divinity unstain'd
 Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars
 Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy streams
 To me, who ill repay thee. I again
 Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,
 Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian slime.'

He said, and lifted in his brimming casque
 The bright refreshing moisture. Thus repairs
 The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,
 Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood
 Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp
 Had roam'd, unheeding, in the secret shade;
 Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,
 And in the pure and fluid crystal cools
 His reeking jaws. Mea time the Thespian's eye
 Roves round the vaulted space; when sudden sounds
 Of music, utter'd by melodious harps
 And melting voices, distant, but in tones
 By distance soften'd, while the echoes sigh'd
 In lulling replication, fill the vault
 With harmony. In admiration mute,
 With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,
 Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes
 The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings
 Fall from his languid side. Plataea's chief,
 Observing, rous'd the warrior. ' Son of Mars,
 Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal
 The sense of glory? From his neighb'ring camp
 Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.
 Soon in bright steel Thermopylæ will blaze.
 Awake! Accustom'd to the clang of arms,
 Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,
 My ear, my spirit, in this hour admit
 No new sensation, nor a change of thought.'

The Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth
 Of ravishment and wonder, quick reply'd....

' These sounds were more than human. Hark! Again!

O honour'd friend, no adverse banner streams
In sight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed
From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge
In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs,
Whose voices charm its gloom.' In smiles rejoin'd
Diomedon.... 'I see thy soul enthrall'd.
Me thou wouldst rank among th' unletter'd rout
Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.
Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd
We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.
Here will I wait, a sentinel unmov'd,
To watch thy coming.' In exploring haste
Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.
He finds it bounded by a steep ascent
Of rugged steps; where, down the hollow rock,
A modulation clear, distinct, and slow,
In movement solemn, from a lyric string,
Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord
With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids!
While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,
We celebrate our heroes, O impart
Orphean magic to the pious strain!
That from the mountain we may call the groves;
Swift motion through these marble fragments breathe,
To overleap the high Oetæan ridge,
And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

The animated hero upward springs,
Light as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd
In subterranean cavities, at length
Pervading, rives the surface, to enlarge
The long imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,
He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rent kneels.

An aged temple, with insculptur'd forms
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,
Who stood in awful majesty, receive
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage,
Whose elevated port and aspect rose
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,

Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair
Shades his inclining forehead ; while a flush
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.
Her pensive visage softens to a smile
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts....

‘ I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,
Who, through the sole access by nature left
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword
Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.
What is the impress on thy warlike shield?’

‘ A golden eagle on my shield I bear,’
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues....

‘ Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat
Of Asia, driv'n before thee? Speak thy name.
Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?
Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,
Or from Barbarian violence to guard
A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes,
Who call thee father?’ Humbly he again....

‘ I am of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,
He to his brother, and my second sire,
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons
By him are led. His dictates I obey;
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks
The least entitled to thy partial praise.’

‘ None more entitled,’ interpos'd the dame.
‘ Deserving hero! thy demeanour speaks,
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride
Of that fair city, which the Muses love,
Thee an accepted visitant I hail
In this their ancient temple! Thou shalt view
Their sacred haunts.’ Descending from the dome,
She thus pursues.... ‘ First, know my youthful hours
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse
To daily meditation won my soul,

With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks
Of her own rapture. By a father sage
Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,
Their institutes and customs. I return'd.
The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain
The holy function here. Now throw thy sight
Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades
Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun
Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train
Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd
From this surrounding wilderness. Remark
That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs;
Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs by Iris dress'd.
Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,
Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight
By figs and grapes.' She pauses; while around
His eye, delighted, roves; in more delight
Soon to the spot returning, where she stood
A deity in semblance, o'er the place
Presiding awful, as Minerva wise,
August like Juno, like Diana pure,
But not more pure than fair. The beauteous lake,
The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,
The multifarious glow on Flora's lap,
Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips
Resume their tale....' In solitude remote
Here I have dwelt contemplative, serene.
Oft through the rocks responsive to my lyre,
Oft to th' Amphictyons in assembly full,
When at this shrine their annual vows they pay,
In measur'd declamation I repeat
The praise of Greece, her liberty and laws.
From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats
In these rude purlieus, modulate their pipes
To smoother cadence. Justice from my tongue
Dissensions calms, which ev'n in deserts rend
Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war
My careful thoughts engages, which delight
To help the free, th' oppressor to confound.
Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings.
In thee a noble messenger I find.
Go, in these words Leonidas address....

"Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
By their behests invites thy honour'd feet
To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks,
To conference of high import she calls."

Th' obedient Thespian down the holy cave
Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents
His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus....

'Let thy adventure be hereafter told.
Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp
File through the Phocian barrier, to construct
Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,
Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm;
That, ready station'd in the glorious van,
We may secure permission from the king
There to continue, and renew the fight.'

That instant brings Megistias near the grot.
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard
By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,
The father warns a young and lib'ral mind....

'Sprung from a distant boundary of Greece,
A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,
Instructed, honour'd, not unworthy held
To fight for Lacedæmon in her line
Of discipline and valour, lo! my son,
The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart;
That in thy hand, not ill-intrusted, shine
The spear and buckler, to maintain the cause
Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recal
Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,
He overlooks the battle; he discerns
The bold and fearful. May the gods I serve
Grant me to hear Leonidas approve
My son! No other boon my age implores.'

The augur paus'd. The animated cheek
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
Demands the fight. This struck the tender sire,
Who then with moisten'd eyes.... 'Remember too
A father sees thy danger. Oh! my child,
To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear;
Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,
By all my fondness, all my cares, I sue!

Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit,
Still by the wise Dienece's abide,
His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths
Of glory. He admits thee to his side.
He will direct thy ardour. Go.' They part.

Megistias, turning, is accosted thus
By Dithyrambus.... 'Venerable seer,
So may that son, whose merit I esteem,
Whose precious head in peril I would die
To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,
As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king
A high and solemn message. While anew
The line is forming, from th' embattled field
I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge
Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.'

The Acarnanian in suspense remains
And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates
Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,
Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief
Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms,
Which, as a splendid recompence, he bore
From grateful Athens, for achievements bold,
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd
Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm
Enclos'd his manly temples. From on high
A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath
A golden dragon, with effulgent scales,
Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm
He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,
Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form
Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.
Low at her feet the graceful tunic flow'd.
Betwixt two griffins, on her helmet, sat
A sphynx, with wings expanded; while the face
Of dire Medusa on her breastplate frown'd.
One hand supports a javelin, which confounds
The pride of kings. The other leads along
A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow
A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents;
But from her shoulders all her plumes were shorn,
In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.

This dread of Asia on his mighty arm
 Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,
 Then spake to Dithyrambus.... 'See, my friend,
 Alone, of all the Grecians who sustain'd
 The former onset, inexhausted stand
 Plataea's sons. They well may keep the field,
 Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day
 Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
 Back to their ships, and Athens left secure.
 Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank
 Thy valour shall be plac'd, to share command,
 And ev'ry honour with Plataea's chief.'

He said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van,
 Impetuous, ardent, strode. Nor slow behind,
 The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd,
 Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms;
 When lightly, graceful, with his feather'd feet,
 Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd
 To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece
 Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste
 Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,
 Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts....

'Not to contend, but vanquish, are ye come.
 Here, in the blood of fugitives, your spears
 Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,
 But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,
 Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise
 Th' Oetæan rocks, and less confine the straits.
 There if we range, extending wide our front,
 An ampler scope to havoc will be giv'n.'

To him Dienece. 'Plataean friend,
 Well dost thou counsel. On that wid'ning ground,
 Close to the mountain, place thy vet'ran files.
 Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch
 Quite to the shore, in phalanx deep, like thine.
 The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part,
 Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits
 With lighter bodies. Further back the line
 Of Locris forms a strong reserve.' He said.
 The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,
 Move on successive. The Plataeans first
 Against the hill are station'd. In their van

Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy
Distends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes.

‘ Bless'd be the great Diomedon,’ they shout,
‘ Who brings another hero to our line.

Hail, Dithyrambus! Hail, illustrious youth!
Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd
An early palm at Marathon.’ His post
He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek
Amid the foremost rank. Around him crowd
The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars
Discov'ring, they in ample phrase recount
Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys
In veneration, nor disdains to hear
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd....

‘ Leonidas salutes Plataea's chief,
And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants
A further effort with Plataea's band,
If yet by toil unconquer'd. But I see
That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.
Hail, glorious vet'rans! This signal day
May your victorious arms augment the wreaths
Around your venerable heads, and grace
Thermopylae with Marathonian fame.’

This said, he hastens back. Meantime advance
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief,
Who near Diomedon, in equal range,
Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.
Alcmaeon, bold Enpalamus, succeed,
With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.
Last, on the Malian shore, Mycenæ's youth-
Aristobulus draws. From Oeta's side
Down to the bay, in well-connected length,
Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,
While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.
A sure support, Dienecees behind
Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,
There Menalippus, by their leader stand,
Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,
The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame
Of expectation through his light-arm'd force;

While Polydorus, present in his thoughts,
To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.
This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.
The solemn scene on Oeta to his friend
He open'd large; pourtray'd Melissa's form,
Reveal'd her mandate; when Piatea's chief....

'Such elevation of a female mind
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain
The conference she asks. This wond'rous dame,
Amid her hymns, conceives some lofty thought
To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,
Dread ev'n our women. But my gentle friend,
Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell
Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods,
Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r?
Or should I thank them that the soft'ning charm
Of sound or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul?
Yet I confess thy valour breaks that charm,
Which may enrapture, not numan thy breast.'

To whom his friend.... 'Doth he whose lays record
The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,
Doth he dissolve thy spirit? Yet he flows
In all the sweetness harmony can breathe.'

'No, by the Gods,' Diomedon rejoins,
'I feel that mighty muse. I see the car
Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels
O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.
Another too demands my soul's esteem,
Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen
His muse begirt by furies, while she swell'd
Her tragic numbers. Him, in equal rage
His country's foes o'erwhelming, I beheld
At Marathon. If Phæbus would diffuse
Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band
Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.
But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye
To yonder point, remotest in the bay.
Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet
Successive round the jutting land, are sails.
Th' Athenian pendant hastens to salute
Leonidas. O Æschylus, my friend,

First in the train of Phœbus and of Mars,
Be thou on board ! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,
Come, and be witness to heroic deeds !
Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords,
To celebrate this battle ! Fall who may ;
But if they fall with honour, let their names
Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,
And joy, not grief, accompany the song.'

Conversing thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which else, impatient of inactive hours,
At long-suspended glory, had repin'd.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VII.

The Argument.

Megistias delivers Melissa's message to Leonidas. Medon, her brother, conducts him to the Temple. She furnishes Leonidas with the means of executing a design he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æschylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the necessary measures; and observing, from a summit of Oeta, the motions of the Persian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Persian leaders at the head of some chosen troops.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VII.

MEGISTIAS, urging to unwonted speed
His aged steps, by Dithyrambus charg'd
With sage Melissa's words, had now rejoin'd
The king of Lacedæmon. At his side
Was Maron posted, watchful to receive
His high injunctions. In the rear they stood
Behind two thousand Locrians, deep array'd
By warlike Medon, from Oileus sprung.
Leonidas to them his anxious mind
Was thus disclosing.... 'Medon, Maron, hear.
From this low rampart my exploring eye
But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
Immense, exhaustless, deluging the ground
With myriads, still o'erflowing, may consume,
By endless numbers and unceasing toil,
The Grecian strength. Not marble is our flesh,
Nor adamant our sinews. Silvan pow'rs,
Who dwell on Oeta, your superior aid
We must solicit. Your stupendous cliffs,
In those loose rocks and branchless trunks, contain
More fell annoyance than the arm of man.'

He ended; when Megistias.... 'Virtuous king,
Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
By their behests, invites thy honour'd feet
To her chaste dwelling, seated on that hill.
To conference of high import she calls
'Thee, first of Grecians.' Medon interpos'd....

'She is my sister. Justice rules her ways
With piety and wisdom. To her voice
The nations round give ear. The muses breathe
Their inspiration through her spotless soul,
Which borders on divinity. She calls

On thee. O, truly styl'd the first of Greeks,
 Regard her call! Yon cliff's projecting head
 To thy discernment will afford a scope
 More full, more certain; thence thy skilful eye
 Will best direct the fight. Melissa's sire
 Was ever present to the king in thought,
 Who thus to Medon....' Lead, Oileus' son:
 Before the daughter of Oileus place
 My willing feet.' They hasten to the cave.
 Megistias, Maron, follow. Through the rock
 Leonidas, ascending to the fane,
 Rose, like the God of morning from the cell
 Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day
 On hill and vale, emblaz'd with dewy gems,
 He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,
 Majestically graceful and serene,
 Disperses the rigour in that solemn seat
 Of holy sequestration. On the face
 Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows,
 In admiration of the godlike man.
 Advanc'd Melissa. He her proffer'd hand,
 In hue, in purity, like snow, receiv'd.
 A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look
 On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake....

' Hail, chief of men, selected by the gods
 For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd!
 This hour allows no pause.' She leads the king,
 With Medon, Maron, and Megistias, down
 A slope, declining to the mossy verge
 Which terminates the mountain. While they pass
 She thus proceeds....' These marble masses view,
 Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn
 From yonder quarry. Note those pond'rous beams,
 The silvan offspring of that bill. With these,
 At my request, th' Amphictyons, from their seat
 Of gen'ral council, piously decreed
 To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece.
 Observe those wither'd firs, those mould'ring oaks,
 Down that declivity, half-fronted, bent,
 Inviting human force. Then look below,
 There lies Thermopylae.'....' I see,' exclaims
 The high-conceiving hero. ' I recal

Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd
I should not find his daughter's counsel vain.
He, to accomplish what thy wisdom plans,
Hath amplest means supply'd. Go, Medon, bring
The thousand peasants, from th' Orlean vale
Detach'd. Their leader, Melibæus, bring.
Fly, Maron. Ev'ry instrument provide
To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,
To lift the broad-hewn fragments.'....' Are not these
For sacred use reserv'd?' Megistias said.
' Can these be wielded by the hand of Mars
Without pollution?' In a solemn tone
The priestess answer'd....' Rev'rend maîr, who bear'st
Pontific wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear.
Forbear to think that my unprompted mind,
Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,
Could have devis'd a stratagem of war;
Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars
These rich materials, gather'd to restore,
In strength and splendour, yon decrepit walls,
And that time-shaken roof. Rejecting sleep,
Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge
On these Barbarians, whose career profane
O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch
Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.
Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd.
The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,
Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw
Calliope. Her sisters, all with harps,
Were rang'd around her; as their Parian forms
Shew in the temple. "Dost thou sleep?" she said;
"Melissa, dost thou sleep? The barb'rous host
Approaches Greece. The first of Grecians comes,
By death to vanquish. Priestess, let him hurl
These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,
Our fane itself, to crush the impious ranks.
The hero summon to our sacred hill.
Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due
To liberty against a tyrant's pride."
She struck her shell. In concert full reply'd
The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung,

In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,
In measures new, in language yet to come.'

She finish'd. Then Megistias.... 'Dear to heav'n,
By nations honour'd, and, in tow'ring thought,
O'er either sex pre-eminent, thy words
To me, a soldier and a priest, suffice.
I hesitate no longer.' But the king,
Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation, stood,
Revolving deep an answer, which might suit
His dignity and hers. At length he spake....

'Not Lacedæmon's whole collected state
Of senate, people, ephori, and kings;
Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds
The universal majesty of Greece,
E'er drew such rev'rence as thy single form,
O, all-surpassing woman, worthy child
Of time-renown'd Oileus! In thy voice
I hear the goddess Liberty. I see,
In thy sublimity of look and port,
That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels
That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise
Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame,
Were I assur'd that oracles delude;
That, unavailing, I should spill my blood;
That all the Muses of subjected Greece
Hereafter would be silent, and my name
Be ne'er transmitted to recording time;
There is in virtue, for her sake alone,
What should uphold my resolution firm.
My country's laws I never would survive.'

Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,
She had relax'd her dignity of mind,
Had sunk in sadness; but her brother's helm
Before her beams. Relumining her night,
He through the cave, like Hesperus, ascends,
Th' Oilean hinds conducting, to achieve
The enterprise she counsels. Now her ear
Is pierc'd by notes, shrill sounding from the vault.
Upstarts a diff'rent band, alert and light,
Athenian sailors. Long and sep'rate files
Of lusty shoulders, eas'd by union, bear

Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave
 The restiff anchor. To a nival pipe,
 As if one soul invigorated all,
 And all compos'd one body, they had trod
 In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke,
 Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength
 Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats
 Of Libya breed, indissolubly knit,
 But flexible, across the sandy plain,
 Or up the mountain, draws his spotted length,
 Or where a winding excavation leads
 Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,
 In arms, which shew'd simplicity of strength,
 No decoration of redundant art,
 With sable horse-hair floating down his back,
 A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait,
 Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield
 The democratic majesty he bore
 Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,
 Her image stood, with Pallas by her side,
 And trampled under each victorious foot
 A regal crown, one Persian, one usurpt
 By her own tyrants, on the well-fought plain
 Of Marathon confounded. He commands
 These future guardians of their country's weal,
 Of gen'ral Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds
 From Artemisium, from th' empurpled shores
 Of Salamis, renown shall echo wide;
 Shall tell posterity, in latest times,
 That naval fortitude controls the world.
 Swift Miron, following, brings a vig'rous band
 Of Helots. Ev'ry instrument they wield
 To delve, to hew, to heave: and, active, last
 Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge
 The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
 Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began....

'Thou godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail!
 Thee by my voice Themistocles salutes,
 The admiral of Athens. I conduct,
 By public choice, the squadron of my tribe.
 And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n
 Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,

Whose promontories almost rise to meet
 Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning saw
 The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,
 Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks,
 For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd
 I was detach'd to bring th' auspicious news,
 To bid thee welcome. Fortunate, my keel
 Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
 In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs,
 Who met me landing, instant from the ships
 A thousand gallant mariners I drew,
 Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.'

'Themistocles and thou accept my heart,'
 Leonidas reply'd, and closely strain'd
 The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast.
 'To envy is ignoble; to admire
 The activity of Athens will become
 A king of Sparta, who, like thee, condemn'd
 His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd.
 Thou shalt commend. Behold me, station'd here
 To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,
 Direct the course of slaughter. To this post
 By that superior woman I was call'd.
 By long protracted fight lest fainting Greece
 Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul
 Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath devis'd
 To whelm the num'rous, persevering foe
 In hideous death, and signalize the day
 With horrors new to war. The Muses prompt
 The bright achievement. Lo! from Athens smiles
 Minerva too. Her swift, auspicious aid
 In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,
 By her and Neptune cherish'd.' Straight he meets
 The gallant train; majestic, with his arms
 Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake....

'O lib'ral people, earliest arm'd, to shield
 Not your own Athens more than gen'ral Greece,
 You best deserve her gratitude. Her praise
 Will rank you foremost on the rolls of fame.'

They hear, they gaze, revering, and rever'd.
 Fresh numbers muster, rushing from the hills,
 The thickets round. Melissa, pointing, spake....

' I am their leader. Natives of the hills
Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan,
Who breathes an ardour through their humble minds
To join you warriors. Vassals these, not mine,
But of the Muses, and their hallow'd laws,
Administer'd by me. Their patient hands
Make culture smile, where nature seems to chide;
Nor wanting my instructions, or my pray'rs,
Fertility they scatter, by their toil,
Around this aged temple's wild domain.
Is Melibœus here? Thon fence secure
To old Oileus from the cares of time,
Thrice art thou welcome! Useful, wise, belov'd,
Where'er thou sojournest, on Oeta known,
As oft a bounty of a father's love
Thou on Melissa's solitude dost pour,
Be thou director of these mountain hinds!

Th' important labour, to inspiring airs,
From flutes and harps, in symphony, with hymns
Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
In bands divided under diff'rent chiefs.
Huge timbers, blocks of marble, to remove
They first attempted; then assembled stones,
Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, uprooted
By tempests; next dismember'd from the rock
Broad, rugged fragments; from the mountain hew'd
Their venerable firs and aged oaks,
Which, of their branches by the lightning bar'd,
Presented still against the blasting flame
Their hoary pride, unshaken. These the Greeks,
But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force
Uniting skill with massy leavers heave,
With strong-knit cables drag; till, now dispos'd
Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
Nod o'er the straits. This new and sudden scene
Might lift imagination to belief
That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds
Of ever-blooming asphodel had heard
The Muses call; had brought their fabled harps,
At whose mellifluous charm once more the trees
Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
In rapid motion from the quarry's womb,

That day to follow harmony, in aid
Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might discern
Cerulean Thetis, from her coral grot
Emerging, seated on her pearly ear,
With Nereids, floating on the surge below,
To view, in wonder, from the Malian bay
The attic sons of Neptune, who forsook
Their wooden walls to range th' Octean crags,
To rend the forests, and disjoin the rocks.

Meantime a hundred sheep are slain. Their limbs
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty spreads
A decent board. Simplicity attends.
Then spake the priestess.... 'Long enduring chiefs,
Your efforts, now accomplish'd, may admit
Refection, due to this hard-labour'd train,
Due to yourselves.' Her hospitable smile
Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,
Her brother, Maron, Æschylus divine,
With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands
To Melibœus, sedulous and blithe,
Distribute plenty through the toiling crowd.
Then, screen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,
Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.

Cool breezes, whisp'ring, flutter in the leaves,
Whose verdure, pendant in an arch, repel
The west'ring sun's hot glare. Favonius bland
His breath impreguates with exhaling sweets
From flow'ry beds, whose scented clusters deck
The gleaming pool in view. Past by a brook,
In limpid lampses, over native steps
Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,
And liquid accents of Melissa's maids.
The floating air in melody respires.
A rapture mingles in the calm repast.
Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full
He grasps.... 'To those divinities who dwell
In yonder temple, this libation first;
To thee, benignant hostess, next I pour;
Then to thy fame, Leonidas.' He said.
His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts
His eager hand, to whose expressive sign
One of the virgins cedes her sacred lyre.

Their choral song complacency restrains.
 The soul of music, bursting from his touch,
 At once gives birth to sentiment sublime.

‘O Hercules and Persens,’ he began,
 ‘Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest
 Of Jove’s immediate seed, your splendid acts
 Mankind protected while the race was rude;
 While o’er the earth’s unciviliz’d extent
 The savage monster and the ruffian sway’d,
 More savage still. No policy, nor laws,
 Had fram’d societies. By single strength
 A single ruffian or a monster fell.
 The legislator rose. Three lights in Greece,
 Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus, blaz’d.
 Then, substituting wisdom, Jove, profuse
 Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
 In discipline and manners, which can form
 A hero like Leonidas, than all
 The god-begotten progeny before.
 The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.
 Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld
 The Atlantéan shape of slaughter wade
 Through your astonish’d deeps, his purple arm
 Uplifting high before th’ Athenian line.
 Yon saw bright conquest riding on the gale
 Which swell’d their sails; saw terror at their helms,
 To guide their brazen beaks on Asia’s pride.
 Her adamant grapple from their decks
 Fate threw, and ruin on the hostile fleet
 Inextricably fasten’d. Sound, ye nymphs
 Of Oeta’s mountains, of her woods and streams,
 Who hourly witness to Melissa’s worth,
 Ye Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, sound her praise!
 Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac’d,
 Like Solon and Lycurgus by their sons.’

Laconia’s hero, and the priestess, bow’d
 Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.
 She, rising, takes the word.... ‘More sweet thy lyre
 To friendship’s ear than terrible to foes
 Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point
 Which ever pierc’d Barbarians. Close we here

The song and banquet. Hark! a distant din
From Asia's camp requires immediate care!"

She leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.
In calm delight, Leonidas surveys
All in the order which he last assign'd,
As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast
A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag
Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began....

'Observe that space below, dispers'd in dales,
In hollows, winding through dissever'd rocks.
The slender outlet, screen'd by yonder shrubs,
Leads to the pass. There stately, to my view
The martial queen of Caria, yester sun
Descending shew'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
But she, devoted to the Persian king,
In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.
She last retreated; but, retreating, prov'd
Her valour equal to a better cause.
Again I see the heroine approach.'

Megistias then....' I see a pow'rful arm,
Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,
Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd
To imitate in Greece. Sublime, her port
Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priestess, look.
An act of piety she now performs,
Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,
To bear dead brethren from the bloody field.
Among the horsemen an exalted form,
Like Demaratus, strikes my searching eye.
'To me, recalling his transcendent rank
In Sparta once, he seems a languid sun,
Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark,
Enveloping his radiance.' While he spake,
Intent on martial duty, Medon views
The dang'rous thicket; Lacedæmon's chief,
Around the region his consid'rate eye
Extending, marks each movement of the foe.

Th' imperial Persian, from his lofty car,
Had, in the morning's early conflict, seen
His vanquish'd army pouring from the straits
Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd

In consternation; as a river bursts
Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,
Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.
Th' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat;
Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breast;
As ruin irresistible were near
To overwhelm his millions. 'Haste!' he call'd
To Hyperanthes, 'haste, and meet the Greeks.
Their daring rage, their insolence, repel.
From such dishonour vindicate our name.'

His royal brother through th' extensive camp
Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
Each active prince, from ev'ry tent remote,
The hardiest troops, he summon'd. Caria's queen,
To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem
Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court,
In solemn pace was now returning slow
Before a band, transporting from the field
Their slain companions to the sandy beach.

She stopt, and thus address'd him. 'Learn, O prince
From one whose wishes on thy merit wait,
The only means to bind thy gallant brow
In fairest wreaths. To break the Grecian line
In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe.
Nor to secure a thicket next the pass
Forget. Selected numbers station there.
Farewell, young hero! May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd
One myriad to sustain me, none had seen
Me quit the dang'rous contest. But the head
Of base Argestes on some future day
Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet
I only stay till burial rites are paid
To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand
May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts,
My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.'

The hero grateful and respectful heard
What soon his warmth neglected, at the sight
Of spears which flam'd innumerable round.
Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,

The satellites of Xerxes. They forsook
 Their constant orbit round th' imperial throne
 At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,
 From their unchanging number they deriv'd
 The title of immortals. Light their spears;
 Set in pomegranates of resplendent gold,
 Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.
 Magnificent and stately were the ranks.
 The prince, commanding mute attention, spake....

‘ In two divisions part your number, chiefs.
 One will I lead to onset. In my ranks
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes, shall advance,
 Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,
 To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece.
 Thou, Abradates, by Sosarnes join'd,
 Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
 From action. Future succour they must lend,
 Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files;
 For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
 The Persian name dishonour. May the acts
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
 By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
 In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords,
 What endless infamy will blast your names,
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
 Your pow'r defy; when Babylon hath low'r'd
 Her tow'ring crest; when Lydia's pride is quell'd
 In Cræsus vanquish'd; when her empire lost
 Ecbatana deplores! Ye chosen guard,
 Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect
 What deeds from your superior swords he claims!
 You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
 Your constancy and prowess, he commits
 His throne, his person, and this day his fame!’

They wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
 Who then three hours tow'rd Ilesperus had driv'n
 From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
 The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard.
 Of diff'rent nations, and in diff'rent garb,
 Innumerable and vary'd, like the shells
 By restless Thetis scatter'd on the beach

O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
Straight by Leonidas decry'd. The van
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,
Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.
So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,
A torrent rolls his thund'ring surge between
The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash
The waters, bursting on the pointed crags;
The valley roars: the marble channel foams.
Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withstand
The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock
Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.
Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
Whose sides half-arching o'er the hosts project,
The unabating fortitude of Greece
Maintains her line; th' untrain'd Barbarians charge
In savage fury. With inverted trunks,
Or bent obliquely from the shagged ridge,
The silvan horrors overshadow the fight.
The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,
The groan of death, and war's discordant shouts,
Alarm the echoes in their neighb'ring caves;
Woods, cliffs, and shores, return the dreadful sound.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VIII.

The Argument.

Hyperanthes discontinuing the fight while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus, the Mantinean, whom he overcomes; then, engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedæmonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army. Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK VIII.

AMID the van of Persia was a youth,
Nam'd Teribazus; not for golden stores;
Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
By fleece abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,
Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours, fam'd.
Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine;
Through ev'ry path of science had he walk'd,
The votary of wisdom. In the years
When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page
Of Zoroastres. Then his tow'ring thoughts
High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.
He, from the lofty Babylonian fane,
With learn'd Chaldeans trac'd the heav'nly sphere;
There number'd o'er the vivid fires which gleam
On night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard
Were Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,
While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd
The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,
The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant,
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
Or in the purer element of fire.
The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,
Mysterions Egypt, with her hidden rites
Of Isis and Osiris. Last he sought
Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung; nor pass'd
Miletus by, which once in rapture heard
The tongue of Thales; nor Priene's walls,
Where wisdom dwelt with Bias; nor the seat
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Lesbian shores.
Th' enlighten'd youth to Susa now return'd,
Place of his birth. His merit soon was dear
To Hyperanthes. It was now the time

That discontent and murmur on the banks
Of Nile were loud and threat'ning. Chembes there
The only faithful stood, a potent lord,
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
With his own blood. To this Egyptian prince
Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,
From the same bed with Hyperanthes born.
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

Th' Egyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain.
They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,
Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves
Of Ariana captives borne away,
Her own pavilion forc'd, her person seiz'd
By ruffian hands; when timely, to redeem
Her and th' invaded camp from further spoil,
Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,
Swift on her chariot seats the royal fair,
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train
None but three female slaves are left. Her guide,
Her comforter and guardian, fate provides
In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone.
No prince, nor satrap, now the single chief
Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,
But with excelling graces in her soul,
Unlike an eastern princess, she inclines
To his consoling, his instructive, tongue
An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet,
Her charms, her mind, her virtues, he explores,
Admiring. Soon his admiration chang'd
To love; nor loves he sooner than despairs.
From morn to ev'n her passing wheels he guards
Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts
Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains
With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand
From purest fountains wafts the living flood.
Nor seldom, by the fair one's soft command
Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd;
While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd

With sweet variety the tedious march,
Beguiling time. He too would then forget
His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd;
Delusion all, the fleeting rays of joy,
Soon overcast by more intense despair.
Like wintry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,
Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,
Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn
Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach
The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
Through Babylon an army to chastize
The crime of Ægypt. Teribazus here
Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel
Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms
On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,
To Ariana's residence, and bears
Deep in his heart th' inmedicable wound.
But unreveal'd and silent was his pain;
Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd,
Nor shun'd resort: but o'er his sorrows cast
A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
Conceal'd his anguish; while the secret flame
Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd,
His soul still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts....

‘ Can I, O Wisdom, find relief in thee,
Who dost approve my passion? From the snares
Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.
But here thyself art charm'd; where softness, grace,
And ev'ry virtue, dignify desire.
Yet thus to love, despairing to possess,
Of all the torments, by relentless fate
On life inflicted, is the most severe.
Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,
That flight alone can save me? I will go
Back to the learn'd Chaldæans, on the banks
Of Ganges seek the sages; where to heav'n
With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.
O wretched Teribazus! all conspires
Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares
To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd

With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,
 Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
 Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly
 From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
 The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn?
 Then be it so. Again I will adore
 Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
 Her gracious sweetness, shall again diffuse
 Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart;
 Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast:
 Then....but in vain through darkness do I search
 My fate....Despair and fortune be my guides!"

The day arriv'd when Xerxes first advanc'd
 His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames,
 So were accustom'd all the eastern fair,
 In sumptuous cars accompany'd his march;
 A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd.
 Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
 Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth,
 Oppress, but not enervate. From the van
 He in this second conflict had withstood
 The threat'ning frown of adamantinè Mars;
 He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd.
 His manly temples no tiara bound.
 The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,
 And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd
 In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes;
 Among th' Ionians were his strenuous limbs
 Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque
 Enclos'd his head. Before his face and chest,
 Down to the knees, an ample shield was spread.
 A pond'rous spear he shook. The well-aim'd point
 Sent two Phliasians to the realms of death,
 With four Tegæans; whose indignant chief,
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
 With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far, unmatched
 His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd
 From fight his fainting legions. Now each band
 Their languid courage reinforce'd by rest.
 Meantime with Teribazus thus conferr'd
 Th' applauding prince....'Thou much deserving youth,

Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van
Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept
Her prostrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile
I now relax, till Abradates strong,
Orontes and Mazæus, are advanc'd.
Then to the conflict will I give no pause.
If not by prowess, yet by endless toil
Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.'

He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce reply'd,
But to himself complain'd, the an'rous youth.

' Still do I languish, mourning o'er the fame
My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou seat
Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles
Yet canst thou borrow from unreal hope
To flatter life? At Ariana's feet
What if with-supplicating knees I bow,
Implore her pity, and reveal my love.
Wretch! canst thou climb to yon refulgent orb,
And share the splendours which irradiate heav'n?
Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim
Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings?
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion fervent as my own, nay more,
Such as, dispelling ev'ry virgin fear,
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire,
My love is hopeless; and her willing hand,
Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord
On both perdition.' By despair benumb'd,
His limbs their action lose. A wish for death
O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries
From Ariannes rouse his drooping pow'rs.
Alike in manners, they, of equal age,
Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
Of war. Together they victorious chas'd
The bleeding sons of Nile, when Ægypt's pride
Before the sword of Hyperanthes fell.
That lov'd companion Teribazus views
By all abandon'd, in his gore outstretch'd,
The victor's spoil. His languid spirit starts;
He rushes ardent from the Persian line;
The wounded warrior in his strong embrace

He bears away. By indignation stung,
 Fierce from the Grecians, Diophantus sends
 A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
 His rescu'd friend. His massy shield he rears;
 High brandishing his formidable spear,
 He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.
 Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes
 The plumed honours of his shining crest.
 Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight;
 Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls.
 Through ev'ry file the Mantineans mourn.
 Long on the slain the victor fix'd his sight
 With these reflections.... 'By thy splendid arms
 Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank.
 From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive
 A more conspicuous lustre. What if heav'n
 Should add new victims, such as thou, to grace
 My undeserving hand? Who knows but she
 Might smile upon my trophies? Oh! vain thought!
 I see the pride of Asia's monarch swell
 With vengeance, fatal to her beauteous head.
 Disperse, ye phantom hopes! Too long, torn heart,
 Hast thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant
 My foot this moment on the verge of death,
 By fame invited, by despair impell'd,
 To pass th' irremeable bound. No more
 Shall Teribazus backward turn his step,
 But here conclude his doom. 'Then cease to heave,
 Thou troubled bosom; ev'ry thought be calm
 Now at th' approach of everlasting peace.'

He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,
 Not less than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd
 The Persian warrior to the Greek began....

'Art thou th' unconquerable chief, who now'd
 Our battle down? That eagle on thy shield
 Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
 I rashly purpos'd. That my single arm
 Thou deign'st to meet, accept my thanks, and know
 The thought of conquest less employs my soul
 Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
 And that by thee I cannot fall disgrac'd.'

He ceas'd. These words the Thespian youth return'd....

‘Of all the praises from thy gen’rons mouth,
 The only portion my desert may claim
 Is this my bold adventure, to confront
 Thee, yet unmatch’d. What Grecian hath not mark’d
 Thy flaming steel? From Asia’s boundless camp
 Not one hath equal’d thy victorious might.
 But whence thy armour of the Grecian form?
 Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the weight
 Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends,
 O if thou be’st some fugitive, who, lost
 To liberty and virtue, art become
 A tyrant’s vile stipendiary, that arm,
 That valour, thus triumphant, I deplore,
 Which, after all their efforts and success,
 Deserve no honour from the gods or men.’

Here Teribazus in a sigh rejoin’d....

‘I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch
 To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,
 Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise
 My name from darkness, while I end my woes.’

The Grecian then.... ‘I view thee, and I mourn.
 A dignity, which virtue only bears,
 Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,
 Though grief hath dimm’d thy drooping eye, demand
 My veneration: and, whatever be
 The malice of thy fortune, what the cares
 Infesting thus thy quiet, they create
 Within my breast the pity of a friend.
 Why then, constraining my reluctant hand
 To act against thee, will thy might support
 Th’ unjust ambition of malignant kings,
 The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace?
 Yet, free from rage or enmity, I lift
 My adverse weapon. Victory I ask.
 Thy life may fate for happier days reserve.’

This said, their beaming lances they pretend,
 Of hostile hate or fury both devoid,
 As on the Isthmian or Olympic sands
 For fame alone contending. Either host,
 Pois’d on their arms, in silent wonder gaz’d.
 The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,
 Which, all the day in constant battle worn,

Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,
Against the Persian buckler, shiv'ring, breaks.
Its master's hand disarming. Then began
The sense of honour and the dread of shame,
To swell in Dithyrambus. Undismay'd,
He grappled with his foe, and instant seiz'd
His threat'ning spear, before th' uplifted arm
Could execute the meditated wound.
The weapon-burst between their struggling grasp.
Their hold they loosen, bare their shining swords.
With equal swiftness to defend or charge,
Each active youth advances and recedes.
On every side they traverse. Now direct,
Obliquely now, the wheeling blades descend.
Still is the conflict dubious; when the Greek,
Dissembling, points his falchion to the ground,
His arm depressing, as o'ercome by toil;
While with his buckler cautious he repels
The blows, repeated by his active foe.
Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades
The ranks of Asia; Hyperanthes strides
Before the line, preparing to receive
His friend triumphant; while the wary Greek
Calm and defensive bears th' assault. At last,
As by th' incautious fury of his strokes,
The Persian swung his cov'ring shield aside;
The fatal moment Dithyrambus seiz'd.
Light darting forward, with his feet outstretch'd,
Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his steel.
Affection, grief, and terror, wing the speed
Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe
The Greek retires, not distant, and awaits
The Persian prince. But he, with wat'ry cheeks,
In speechless anguish clasps his dying friend;
From whose cold lip, with interrupted phrase,
These accents break.... 'O dearest, best of men!
Ten thousand thoughts of gratitude and love
Are struggling in my heart.... O'erpow'ring fate
Denies my voice the utterance.... O my friend!
O Hyperanthes! Hear my tongue unfold
What, had I liv'd, thou never shouldst have known.
I lov'd thy sister! With despair I lov'd!

Soliciting this honourable doom,
 Without regret, in Persia's sight and thine,
 I fall.' Th' inexorable hand of fate
 Weighs down his eyelids, and the gloom of death
 His fleeting light eternally o'ershades.
 Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge
 A frantic mother shall bewail; shall strew
 Her silver tresses in the crystal wave;
 While all the shores re-echo to the name
 Of Teribazus lost. Th' afflicted prince,
 Contemplating in tears the pallid corse,
 Vents in these words the bitterness of grief.

' Oh Teribazus! Oh my friend! whose loss
 I will deplore for ever. Oh what pow'r,
 By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breast
 To Hyperanthes, in distrust unkind!
 She should, she must have lov'd thee! Now no more
 Thy placid virtues, thy instructive tongue,
 Shall drop their sweetness on my secret hours.
 But in complaints doth friendship waste the time,
 Which to immediate vengeance should be giv'n?'

He ended, rushing furious on the Greek;
 Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd,
 While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
 The last embraces of his gasping friend,
 Stood nigh, reclin'd in sadness on his shield,
 And in the pride of victory repin'd.
 Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward sprung
 Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth
 Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus....

' Hold thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth
 Than thou and Xerxes, with his host of slaves.'

His words he seconds with his rapid lance.
 Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd;
 But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a crowd
 Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space
 Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,
 With fruitless efforts, they attempt the fight.
 So rage two bulls along th' opposing banks
 Of some deep-flood, which parts the fruitful mead.
 Defiance thunders from their angry mouths

In vain; in vain the furrow'd sod they rend;
Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war.

As, by malignant fortune, if a drop
Of moisture mingles with a burning mass
Of liquid metal, instant show'rs of death
On ev'ry side th' exploding fluid spreads;
So disappointment irritates the flame
Of fierce Plataea's chief, whose vengeance bursts
In wide destruction. Embas, Daenus, fall;
Arsæus, Oclius, Mendes, Artias, die;
And ten most hardy of th' immortal guard;
To shivers breaking on the Grecian shield
Their gold embellish'd weapons, raise a mound
O'er thy pale body, Oh in prime destroy'd,
Of Asia's garden once the fairest plant,
Fall'n Teribazus! Thy distracted friend
From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd
By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore;
Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
The succours new, by Abradates brought,
Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,
Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus....

' Strong reinforcement from th' immortal guard
Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
In charge to harass, by perpetual toil,
Those Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
To me thy valour. Here the hostile ranks
Less stable seem. Our joint impression try;
Let all the weight of battle here impend.
Rouse, Hyperanthes! Give regret to winds.
Who hath not lost a friend this direful day?
Let not our private cares assist the Greeks,
Too strong already, or let sorrow act:
Mourn and revenge.' These animating words
Send Hyperanthes to the foremost line.
His vengeful ardour leads. The battle joins.

Who stemm'd this tide of onset? Who imbru'd
His shining spear the first in Persian blood?
Eupalamus. Artembares he slew,
With Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd
On his tempestuous brow, the savage sons

Of violence and rapine. But their doom
Fires Hyperanthes, whose vindictive blade
Arrests the victor in his haughty course.
Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
Melissus swells the number of the dead.
None could Mycenæ boast of prouder birth
Than young Melissus, who in silver mail
The line embellish'd. He in Cirrha's mead,
Where high Parnassus from his double top
O'ershades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize
Of fame obtain'd. Low sinks his laurel'd head
In death's cold night, and horrid gore deforms
The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge,
Aristobulus strides before the van.
A storm of fury darkens all his brow.
Around he rolls his gloomy eye: For death
Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
Deriv'd from Cræsus, once imperial lord
Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept,
When, with delusive oracles beguil'd
By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves
A mighty empire to dissolve: nor knew
Th' ill-destin'd prince that envious fortune watch'd
That direful moment, from his hand to wrest
The sceptre of his fathers. In the shade
Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow
Lay hid, till, rous'd to battle, on this field
Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed
In him extinct for ever. Lyeis dies,
For boist'rous war ill chosen. He was skill'd
To tune the lulling flute and melt the heart,
Or with his pipe's awak'ning strain allure
The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance.
They on the verdant level graceful mov'd
In vary'd measures; while the cooling breeze,
Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er
Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cæster's stream,
Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hostile blade
Draws forth his entrails. Prone he falls. Not long
The victor triumphs. From the prostrate corse
Of Lyeis, while, insulting, he extracts
The reeking weapon, Hyperanthes' steel

Invades his knee, and cuts the sinewy cords.
The Mycenæans with uplifted shields,
Corinthians and Phliasians, close around
The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage
The contest glows. Abrocomes incites
Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.
Here Abradates, there Mazæus press,
Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire
From toil or peril. Urg'd on ev'ry side,
Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.
Despairing, raging, destitute, he stands,
Propt on his spear. His wound forbids retreat.
None, but his brother Eumenes, abides
The dire extremity. His studded orb
Is held defensive. On his arm the sword
Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.
Down drops the buckler, and the sever'd hand
Resigns its hold. The unprotected pair
By Asia's hero to the ground are swept;
As to a reaper crimson poppies low'r
Their heads luxuriant on the yellow plain.
From both their breasts the vital currents flow,
And mix their streams. Elate, the Persians pour
Their numbers, deep'ning on the foe, dismay'd.
The Greeks their station painfully maintain.
This Anaxander saw, whose faithless tongue
His colleague Leontiades bespake....

‘The hour is come to serve our Persian friends.
Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire,
A bloodless conquest yielding to the king.’

This said, he drew the Thebans from their post,
Not with unpunish'd treachery. The lance
Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat;
Nor knew the Asian chief that Asia's friend
Before him bled. Meantime, as mighty Jove,
Or he more ancient on the throne of heav'n,
When from the womb of Chaos dark the world
Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd,
Confusion thence with pow'rful voice dispell'd,
Till light and order universal reign'd!
So from the hill Leonidas survey'd

The various war. He saw the Theban rout;
 That Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ, look'd
 Affrighted backward. Instantly his charge
 Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,
 Precipitating down the sacred cave,
 That Sparta's ranks, advancing, should repair
 The disunited phalanx. Ere they move
 Diences inspires them.... 'Fame, my friends,
 Calls forth your valour in a signal hour.
 For you this glorious crisis she reserv'd,
 Laconia's splendour to assert. Young man,
 Son of Megistiaz, follow.' He conducts
 Th' experienc'd troop. They lock their shields, and
 wedg'd

In dense arrangement, repossess the void
 Left by the faithless Thebans, and repulse
 Th' exulting Persians. When, with efforts vain,
 These oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd
 As oft, confounded with diminish'd ranks,
 Lo! Hyperanthes blush'd, repeating late
 The words of Artemisia.... 'Learn, O chiefs,
 The only means of glory and success.
 Unlike the others, whom we newly chas'd,
 These are a band selected from the Greeks,
 Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear
 By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
 In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,
 Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside
 O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,
 Our martial art above the vulgar herd?
 Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
 To form a troop, and emulate the foe.'

They wait not dubious. On the Malian shore
 In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
 Of all the nobles; Abradates strong,
 Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might
 Of brave Abrocomes, with each who bore
 The highest honours, and excell'd in arms;
 Themselves the lords of nations, who before
 The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
 To these succeed a chosen number, drawn
 From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight;

Who from their king perpetual stipends share;
Who, station'd round the provinces, by force
His tyranny uphold. In ev'ry part
Is Hyperanthes active, ardent, seen
Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts
Their equal range, then, cautious, lest on march
Their unaccustom'd order should relax,
Full in the centre of the foremost rank
Orontes plants, committing to his hand
Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds
Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun
The richest dye of Tyre. The royal bird
Amid the gorgeous tincture shone express'd
In high-embroider'd gold. The wary prince
On this conspicuous, leading, sign of war,
Commands each satrap, posted in the van,
To fix his eye regardful, to direct
By this alone his even pace and slow,
Retiring, or advancing. So the star,
Chief of the spangles on that fancy'd bear,
Once an Ildæan nymph, and nurse of Jove,
Bright Cynosura, to the Boréal pole
Attracts the sailor's eye, when distance hides
The headland signals, and her guiding ray,
New-ris'n, she throws. The hero next appoints
That ev'ry warrior through the length'ning files,
Observing none but those before him plac'd,
Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue.
Nor is th' important thicket next the pass
Forgot. Two thousand of th' immortal guard
That station seize. His orders all perform'd,
Close by the standard he assumes his post.
Intrepid, thence he animates his friends....

‘ Heroic chieftains, whose unconquer'd force
Rebellious Egypt and the Libyan felt,
Think what the splendour of your former deeds
From you exacts. Remember, from the great
Illustrious actions are a debt to fame.
No middle path remains for them to tread,
Whom she hath once ennobled. Lo! this day
By trophies new will signalize your names,
Or in dishonour will for ever cloud.’

He said, and vig'rous all to fight proceed. .
 As, when tempestuous Eurus steins the weight
 Of western Neptune, struggling through the straits
 Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm
 With rapid wing reverberates the tide ;
 There the contending surge, with furrow'd tops,
 To mountains swells, and, whelming o'er the beach
 On either coast, impels the hoary foam
 On Mauritanian and Iberian strands :
 Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps
 Her foreinost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
 By chosen warriors; while the num'rous crowd,
 Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
 Give weight and pressure to th' embattled chiefs,
 Despising danger. Like the mural strength
 Of some proud city, bulwark'd round, and arm'd
 With rising tow'rs, to guard her wealthy stores,
 Immovable, impenetrable, stood
 Laconia's ferry'd phalanx. In their face
 Grim tyranny her threat'ning fetters shakes,
 Red havock grinds, insatiable, his jaws.
 Greece is behind, intrusting to their swords
 Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns
 Of their forefathers. Present now to thought
 Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,
 What'er they honour, venerate, and love.

Bright in the Persian van th' exalted lance
 Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk
 Of Abradates, terrible in war.
 Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen
 Dienees; while Agis, close in rank
 With Menalippus, and the added strength
 Of dauntless Maron, their connected shields
 Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains
 The conflict undecided; nor could Greece
 Repel the adverse numbers, nor the weight
 Of Asia's band select remove the Greeks.

Swift from Laconia's king, perceiving soon
 The Persian's new arrangement, Medon flew,
 Who thus the staid Dienees address'd....

' Leonidas commands the Spartan ranks

To measure back some paces. Soon he deems,
The unexperie'd foes in wild pursnit
Will break their order. Then the charge renew.'

This heard, the signal of retreat is giv'n.
The Spartans seem to yield. The Persians stop.
Astonishment restrains them, and the doubt
Of unexpected victory. Their sloth
Abrocomes awakens....' By the sun,
They fly before us. My victorious friends,
Do you delay to enter Greece? Away!
Rush on intrepid! I already hear
Our horse, our chariots, thund'ring on her plains,
I see her temples wrapt in Persian fires.'

He spake. In hurry'd violence they roll
Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace
Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.
This when the sage Dienece describes,
The Spartans halt, returning to the charge
With sudden vigour. In a moment, pierc'd
By his resistless steel, Orontes falls,
And quits th' imperial banner. This the chief
In triumph waves. The Spartans press the foe.
Close-wedg'd and square, in slow, progressive pace,
O'er heaps of mangled carcasses and arms,
Invincible they tread. Composing flutes
Each thought, each motion, harmonize. No rage
Untunes their souls. The phalanx yet more deep
Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands
Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.
Amid their flight what vengeance from the arm
Of Alpheus falls! O'er all in swift pursuit
Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd
The son of Peleus in the dusty course;
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
Of Polydorus animate his strength
With tenfold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,
When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost
The wonted light, his buckler's polish'd face
Is now obscur'd; the figur'd bosses drop
In crimson, spouting from his deathful strokes.
As when, with horror wing'd, a whirlwind rears
A shatter'd navy from the ocean cast,

Enormous fragments hide the level bench;
 Such as dejected Persia late beheld
 On Thessaly's unnavigable strand:
 Thus o'er the champaign satraps lay bestrewn
 By Alphens, persevering in pursuit
 Beyond the pass. Not Phœbus could inflict
 On Niobé more vengeance when, incens'd
 By her maternal arrogance, which scorn'd
 Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,
 And one by one, from youth and beauty, hurl'd
 Her sons to Pluto; nor severer pangs
 That mother felt than pierc'd the gen'rous soul
 Of Hyperanthes, while his noblest friends
 On ev'ry side lay gasping. With despair
 He still contends. Th' immortals, from their stand
 Behind th' entangling thicket next the pass,
 His signal rouses. Ere they clear their way,
 Well-caution'd Medon from the close defile
 Two thousand Locrians pours. An aspect new
 The fight assumes. Through implicated shrubs
 Confusion waves each banner. Falchions, spears,
 And shields, are all encumber'd; till the Greeks
 Had forc'd a passage to the yielding foe.
 Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
 Wide-wasting once the Calydonian fields,
 In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,
 Rang'd with less havoc through unguarded folds
 Than Medon, sweeping down the glitt'ring files,
 So vainly styl'd immortal. From the cliff
 Divine Melissa and Laconia's king
 Enjoy the glories of Oileus' son.
 Pierce Alpheus too, returning from his chase,
 Joins in the slaughter. Ev'ry Persian falls.

To him the Locrian chief... 'Brave Spartan, thanks.
 Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full.
 My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears
 Shall guard the shelter'd bushes. Come what may
 From Asia's camp, th' assailant, flank'd and driv'n
 Down yonder slope, shall perish. Gods of Greece,
 You shall behold your fanes profusely deck'd
 In splendid off'rings from Barbarian spoils,
 Won by your free-born supplicants this day.'

This said, he forms his ranks. Their threat'ning points
 Glean through the thicket, whence the shiv'ring toes
 Avert their sight, like passengers dismay'd,
 Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks
 Descry, in ambush of perfidious reeds,
 The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
 Thermopylæ. Dieneces secur'd
 The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans shew'd:
 One tow'rd the plain observ'd the Persian camp;
 One, led by Agis, fac'd the interior pass.

Not yet discourag'd, Hyperanthes strives
 The scatter'd host to rally. He exhorts,
 Entreats; at length, indignant, thus exclaims....

' Degen'rate Persians! to sepulchral dust
 Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb
 Would utter groans. Inglorious, do ye leave
 Behind you Persia's standard to adorn
 Some Grecian temple? Can your splendid cars,
 Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,
 Your gold, your gems, ye satraps, be preserv'd
 By cowardice and flight? The eunuch slave
 Will scorn such lords, your women loath your beds.'

Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight
 His unabating courage oft renews,
 As oft repuls'd with danger; till, by all
 Deserted, mixing in the gen'ral rout,
 He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.
 In short advances, thus the dying tide
 Beats for a while against the shelving strand,
 Still by degrees retiring, and at last
 Within the bosom of the main subsides.

'Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n;
 Close to the mountain, whose indented side
 There gave the widen'd pass an ample space
 For numbers to embattle, still his post
 Bold Intaphernes, underneath a cliff,
 Against the firm Plataean line maintain'd.
 On him look'd down Leonidas, like Death,
 When, from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,
 He stands gigantic on a mountain's head;
 Whence he commands th' affrighted earth to quake,
 And, crags and forests in his direful grasp

High-wielding, dashes on a town below,
Whose deeds of black impiety provoke
The long-enduring Gods. Around the verge
Of Oeta, curving to a crescent's shape,
The marbles, timbers, fragments, lay amass'd.
The Helots, peasants, mariners, attend
In order nigh Leonidas. They watch
His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once,
The force, the skill, activity, and zeal,
Of thousands are combin'd. Down rush the piles.
Trees roll'd on trees, with mingled rock descend,
Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound
The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.
Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below
Look up aghast, in horror shrink, and die.
Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous load,
Lie hid and lost, as never they had known
A name or being. Intaphernes, clad
In regal splendour, progeny of kings,
Who rul'd Damascus, and the Syrian plains,
Here slept for ever. Thousands of his train
In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.
Back to the camp a passage they attempt
Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis stopt.
Before his pow'rful arm Pandates fell,
Sosarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd
His youthful steel in blood. The mightier spear
Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd
The track of slaughter. Backward turn'd the ront,
Nor found a milder fate. Th' unwary'd swords
Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon,
Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,
Still flash tremendous. To the shore they fly,
At once envelop'd by successive bands
Of diff'rent Grecians. From the gulph profound
Perdition here inevitable frowns,
While there, encircled by a grove of spears,
They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars.
Now not a moment's interval delays
Their gen'ral doom; but down the Malian steep
Prone are they hurry'd to th' expanded arms
Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,

And grasping all their numbers as they fall.
The dire confusion like a storm invades
The chafing surge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge.
O'er all their arms, their ensigns, deep-engulph'd,
With hideous roar the waves for ever close.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IX.

The Argument.

Night coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall, under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave, who attended her, proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Muron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneccs, with a party of Lacedæmonians, to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK IX.

IN sable vesture, spangled o'er with stars,
The night assum'd her throne. Reca'd from war,
Their toil protracted long, the Greeks forget,
Dissolv'd in silent slumber, all but those
Who watch'd th' uncertain perils of the dark,
A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.
High on the wall, intent, the hero sat.
Fresh winds across the undulating bay
From Asia's host the various din convey'd
In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear;
When, by the sound of footsteps down the pass
Alarm'd, he calls aloud.... 'What feet are these
Which beat th' echoing pavement of the rock?
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.'

A voice reply'd.... 'No enemies we come,
But crave admittance in an humble tone.'

The Spartan answers.... 'Through the midnight shade
What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad?'

To whom the stranger.... 'We are friends to Greece.
Through thy assistance we implore access
To Lacedæmon's king.' The cautious Greek
Still hesitates: when musically sweet
A tender voice his wond'ring ear allures.

'O gen'rous warrior, listen to the pray'r
Of one distress'd, whom grief alone hath led
Through midnight shades to these victorious tents;
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.'

The chief, descending, through th' unfolded gates
Upheld a flaming torch. The light disclos'd
One first in servile garments. Near his side
A woman graceful and majestic stood;
Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r
Of fatal Helen, or th' ensnaring charms

Of love's soft queen; but such as far surpass'd
 Whate'er the lily, blending with the rose,
 Spreads on the cheek of beauty, soon to fade;
 Such as express'd a mind by wisdom rul'd,
 By sweetness temper'd; virtue's purest light -
 Illumining the countenance divine:
 Yet could not soften rig'rous fate, nor charm
 Malignant fortune to revere the good;
 Which oft with anguish rends a spotless heart,
 And oft associates wisdom with despair.
 In courteous phrase began the chief humane....

' Exalted fair, whose form adorns the night,
 Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.
 My slow compliance to the rigid laws
 Of Mars impute. In me no longer pause
 Shall from the presence of our king withhold
 This thy apparent dignity and worth.'

Here ending, he conducts her. At the call
 Of his lov'd brother, from his couch arose
 Leonidas. In wonder he survey'd
 Th' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd.
 Her eye submissive, to the ground declin'd,
 In veneration of the godlike man.
 His mien, his voice, her anxious dread dispel,
 Benevolent and hospitable thus....

' Thy looks, fair stranger, amiable and great,
 A mind delineate which from all commands
 Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
 By what relentless destiny compell'd,
 Thy tender feet the paths of darkness tread;
 Rehearse th' afflictions whence thy virtue mourns.'

On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose,
 Like day first dawning on the twilight pale?
 When, wrapt in grief, these words a passage found....

' If to be most unhappy, and to know
 That hope is irrecoverably fled,
 If to be great and wretched, may deserve
 Commiseration from the brave; behold,
 Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
 Behold, descended from Darius' loins,
 Th' afflicted Ariana; and my pray'r
 Accept with pity, nor my tears disdain.

First, that I lov'd the best of human race,
 Heroic, wise, adorn'd by ev'ry art,
 Of shame unconscious, doth my heart reveal.
 This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,
 He fought, he fell. A passion long conceal'd,
 For me, alas! within my brother's arms
 His dying breath resigning, he disclos'd.
 Oh! I will stay my sorrows! will forbid
 My eyes to stream before thee, and my breast,
 O'erwhelm'd by anguish, will from sighs restrain!
 For why should thy humanity be griev'd
 At my distress, why learn from me to mourn
 The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and wo!
 Hear then, O king, and grant my sole request,
 To seek his body in the heaps of slain.'

Thus to the hero sn'd the royal maid,
 Resembling Ceres in majestic wo,
 When supplicating Jove, from Stygian gloom,
 And Pluto's black embraces, to redeem
 Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. Awhile
 On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,
 These tender thoughts Leonidas recal'd....

' Such are thy sorrows, O for ever dear,
 Who now at Lacedæmon dost deplore
 My everlasting absence!' Then aside
 He turn'd and sigh'd. Recovering, he address'd
 His brother.... ' Most beneficent of men,
 Attend, assist this prince!' Night retires
 Before the purple-winged morn. A band
 Is call'd. The well-remember'd spot they find
 Where Teribazus from his dying hand
 Dropt in their sight his formidable sword.
 Soon from beneath a pile of Asian dead
 They draw the hero, by his armour known.

Then, Ariana, what transeending pangs
 Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breast
 Love still was mightiest. On the bosom cold
 Of Teribazus, grief-distracted maid,
 Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy snowy hue
 The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds
 Loose flow'd thy hair, and, bubbling from thy eyes,

Impetuous sorrow lay'd th' empurpled clay.
When forth in groans these lamentations broke....

' O, torn for ever from these weeping eyes!
Thou, who, despairing to obtain a heart
Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
Thy life to fate's inevitable dart
For her, who now in agony reveals
Her tender passion, who repeats her vows
To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own
Unites thy cheek insensible and cold.
Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly, orbs
Perceive my gushing sorrow! Can that heart
At my complaint dissolve the ice of death,
To share my sufferings? Never, never more
Shall Ariana bend a list'ning ear
To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast
Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue!
Oh! bitter, insurmountable distress!

She could no more. Invincible despair
Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,
Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines
The silent head, in imitated woe,
O'er some dead hero whom his country lov'd,
Entranc'd by anguish, o'er the breathless clay
So hung the princess. On the gory breach,
Whence life had issu'd by the fatal blow,
Mate for a space, and motionless, she gaz'd;
When thus in accents firm. ' Imperial pomp,
Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell!
There is a state where only virtue holds
The rank supreme. My Teribazus there
From his high order must descend to mine.'

Then, with no trembling hand, no change of look,
She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd!
And, instant sheathing in her heart the blade,
O'er her slain lover silent sunk in death!
The unexpected stroke prevents the care
Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress,
Like one who, standing on a stormy beach,
Beholds a found'ring vessel by the deep
At once engulf'd, his pity feels and mourns,

Depriv'd of pow'r to save; so Agis view'd
The prostrate pair. He dropt a tear, and thus....

' Oh, much lamented! Heavy on your heads
Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
Commands this sorrow from a stranger's eye.
Illustrious ruins! May the grave impart
That peace which life deny'd! And now receive
This pious office from a hand unknown.'

He spake, unclasping from his shoulders broad
His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds
O'er each wan visage; turning then, address'd
The slave, in mute dejection standing near....

' Thou, who, attendant on this hapless fair,
Hast view'd this dreadful spectacle, return.
These bleeding reliques bear to Persia's king;
Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.'

' Art thou a Spartan?' interrupts the slave.
' Dost thou command me to return, and pine
In climes unblest'd by liberty or laws?
Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone
Let him decide if, wretched as I seem,
I may not claim protection from this camp.'

' Whoe'er thou art,' rejoins the chief, amaz'd,
But not offended, ' thy ignoble garb
Conceal'd a spirit which I now revere.
Thy countenance demands a better lot
Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,
Unconscious, offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece,
Humanity and justice. Thou shalt see
Leonidas, their guardian.' To the king
He leads him straight; presents him in these words....

' In mind superior to the base attire
Which marks his limbs with shame, a stranger comes,
Who thy protection claims.' The slave subjoins....

' I stand thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn
If I deserve thy favour. I request
To meet th' assembled chieftains of this host.
Oh! I am fraught with tidings which import
The weal of ev'ry Grecian.' Agis swift,
Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
The diff'rent leaders. To the tent they speed.
Before them call'd, the stranger thus began....

‘ O Alpheus! Maron! Hither turn your sight,
And know your brother!’ From their seats they start.
From either breaks, in ecstacy, the name
Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
Each fondly strives to rush; but he withstands;
While down his cheek a flood of anguish pours
From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
On that vile garb, dishonouring his form.
At length these accents, intermix’d with groans,
A passage found, while mute attention gaz’d.

‘ You first should know if this unhappy slave
Yet merits your embraces.’ Then approach’d
Leonidas. Before him all recede,
Ev’n Alpheus’ self, and yields his brother’s hand,
Which in his own the regal hero press’d.
Still Polydorus on his gloomy front
Repugnance stern to consolation bore;
When thus the king with majesty benign....

‘ Lo! every heart is open to thy worth.
Injurious fortune and enfeebling time,
By servitude and grief, severely try
A lib’ral spirit. Try’d, but not subdu’d,
Dost thou appear. Whatever be our lot
Is heav’n’s appointment. Patience best becomes
The citizen and soldier. Let the sight
Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom.’

Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc’d,
Who with increas’d humanity begin....

‘ Now in thy native liberty secure,
Smile on thy past affliction, and relate
What chance restores thy merit to the arms
Of friends and kindred.’ Polydorus then....

‘ I was a Spartan. When my tender prime
On manhood border’d, from Laconia’s shores
Snatch’d by Phœnician pirates, I was sold
A slave, by Hyperanthes bought, and giv’n
To Ariana. Gracious was her hand,
But I remain’d a bondman, still estrang’d
From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft,
In friendly sorrow, would my lot deplore;
Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn’d,
Lost to his country in a servile court,

The centre of corruption ; where in smiles
Are painted envy, treachery, and hate,
With rankling malice ; where, alone sincere,
The dissolute seek no disguise ; where those,
Possessing all a monarch can bestow,
Are far less happy than the meanest heir
To freedom, far more grov'ling than the slave
Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun
Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd
Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
My bloom is pass'd, or, pining in despair,
Untimely wither'd. I at last return
A messenger of fate, who tidings bear
Of desolation.' Here he paus'd in grief
Redoubled ; when Leonidas.... ' Proceed.
Should from thy lips inevitable death
To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none
Whose dauntless hearts can entertain a thought
But how to fall the noblest.' Thus the king.
The rest in speechless expectation wait.
Such was the solemn silence which o'erspread
The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,
When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long
Suspends the council, but resumes his tale....

' As I this night accompany'd the steps
Of Ariana, near the pass we saw
A restless form, now traversing the way,
Now as a statue rivetted by doubt,
Then on a sudden starting to renew
An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,
Descri'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent
Our midnight course he ask'd. I knew the voice
Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
The venerable exile, and reply'd....

" Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
Farewell." He wept. " Be heav'n thy guide," he said,
' Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again
Mayst visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.
Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
Say to the Spartans, from their exil'd king,

Although their blind credulity depriv'd
 The wretched Demaratus of his home,
 From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,
 His offspring torn, his countrymen and friends,
 Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.
 Say that ev'n here, where all are kings or slaves,
 Amid the riot of flagitious courts,
 Not quite extinct, his Spartan spirit glows,
 Though grief hath dimm'd its fires. Rememb'ring this,
 Report that newly to the Persian host
 Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
 Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought.
 He to the monarch magnify'd his art,
 Which, by delusive eloquence, had wrought
 The Greeks to such despair, that ev'ry band
 To Persia's sov'reign standard would have bow'd,
 Had not the spirit of a single chief,
 By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,
 Restor'd their valour: therefore, would the king
 Trust to his guidance a selected force,
 They soon should pierce th' unguarded bounds of Greece
 Through a neglected aperture above,
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way!
 Meantime by him the treacherous Thebans sent
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting prince
 At once decreed two myriads to advance
 With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord besides,
 Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
 From all the nations, with a rival zeal
 To enter Greece the foremost." In a sigh
 He clos'd....like me.' Tremendous, from his seat
 Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames.
 When swift on trembling Anaxander, broke
 These ireful accents from his livid lips....

' Yet, ere we fall, O traitor, shall this arm
 To hell's avenging furies sink thy head!

All now is tumult. Ev'ry bosom swells
 With wrath untam'd and vengeance. Half unsheath'd,
 Th' impetuous falchion of Plataea flames.
 But, as the Colchian sorceress, renown'd
 In legends of I, or Circé, when they fram'd

A potent spell, to smoothness charm'd the main,
 And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song,
 Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,
 Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
 The lightest whisper through the magic air;
 So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
 Confusion listens; ire in silent awe
 Subsides. 'Withhold this rashness,' cries the king.
 'To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.
 Not yet Barbarian shouts our camp alarm.
 We still have time for vengeance, time to know
 If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
 Or how most glorious perish.' Next arose
 Dieneces, and thus th' experienc'd man....

'Ere they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops
 Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.
 The spears of Phocis guard that secret pass.
 To them let instant messengers depart,
 And note the hostile progress.' Alpheus here....

'Leonidas, behold, my willing feet
 Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;
 Shall climb the hill to watch th' approaching foe.'

'Thou active son of valour,' quick returns
 The chief of Lacedæmon, 'in my thoughts
 For ever present, when the public weal
 Requires the swift, the vigilant, and bold,
 Go, climb, surmount the rock's aerial height;
 Observe the hostile march. A Spartan band,
 Dieneces, provide. Thyself conduct
 Their speedy succour to our Phocian friends.'

The council rises. For his course prepar'd,
 While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
 'O Polydorus,' Alpheus thus in haste,
 'Long lost, and late recover'd, we must part
 Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return
 To kiss the sacred soil which gave thee birth,
 And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
 I should have sighs to give thee....but farewell!
 My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.'

This said, he darts along, nor looks behind,
 When Polydorus answers....'Alpheus, no.

I have the marks of bondage to erase.

My blood must wash the shameful stain away.'

'We have a father,' Maron interpos'd.

'Thy unexpected presence will revive
His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.'

To him the brother with a gloomy frown....

'Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes;
Faint is their light; and vanish'd was my bloom
Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast
Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time
Be dispossest. Unceasing shall my soul
Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth
In slavery exhausted. Life to me
Hath lost its savour.' Then, in sullen wo,
His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.

Now in his view Dienece appears'd,
With Sparta's hand. Immoveable, his eyes
On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts....

'I too, like them, from Lacedæmon spring;
Like them instructed once to poise the spear,
To lift the ponderous shield. Ill-destin'd wretch!
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates!
Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds!
Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,
My ten years' anguish, and the fell despair
Which on my youth have prey'd? Relenting once,
Grant I may bear my buckler to the field,
And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below.'

'Why, to be known a Spartan, must thou seek
The shades below?' Impatient Maron spake.

'Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds.
Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth.
Live, and perform the duties which become
A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He, who leads
Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close
Without an offspring to uphold the state.'

'He will,' replies the brother in a glow,

Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek ;
 ' He will permit me to complete by death
 The measure of my duty ; will permit
 Me to achieve a service, which no hand
 But mine can render, to adorn his fall
 With double lustre, strike the barb'rous foe
 With endless terror, and avenge the shame
 Of an enslav'd Laconian.' Closing here
 His words mysterious, quick he turn'd away,
 To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
 In grateful sorrow minister'd her aid ;
 While the humane, the hospitable, care
 Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse,
 On one sad bier, the pallid beauties laid
 Of Ariana. He from bondage freed
 Four eastern captives, whom his gen'rous arm
 That day had spar'd in battle ; then began
 This solemn charge. ' You, Persians, whom my sword
 Acquir'd in war, unransom'd, shall depart.
 To you I render freedom, which you sought
 To wrest from me. One recompence I ask,
 And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp
 This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king
 Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom ;
 Then say th' all-indulging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.
 Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
 Leads desolation ; o'er the nations spreads
 Calamity and tears ; thou first shalt mourn,
 And through thy house destruction first shall range.'

Dismiss'd, they gain the rampart, where on guard
 Was Dithyrambus posted. He perceiv'd
 The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
 Of Ariana was already told.

He met the captives with a moisten'd eye,
 Full bent on Teribazus, sigh'd, and spake....

' O that, assuming with those Grecian arms
 A Grecian spirit, thou in scorn hadst look'd
 On princes ! Worth like thine, from slavish courts
 Withdrawn, had ne'er been wasted to support
 A king's injustice. Then a gentler lot
 Had bless'd thy life, or, dying, thou hadst known,
 How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek

Affords these friendly wishes, though his head
Had lost the honours gather'd from thy fall,
When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove
Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair,
Whom in compassion's purest dew I lave,
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound,
And must be grievous to your loathing shades,
From all the neigh'bring vallies would I cull
Their fairest growth to strew your hearse with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs!
May peace surround your ashes! May your shades
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats!

He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK X.

The Argument.

Medon convenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper Straits, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibæus brings her tidings of her father's death. She strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibæus. In the morning the bodies of Teribæus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Aexres, soon after a report had reached the camp that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares that the enemy was master of the passages in the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylæ the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops, except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias, refuse to depart; then, to relieve the perplexity of Medon on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argestes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavilion.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK X.

THE Grecian leaders, from the council ris'n,
Among the troops dispersing, by their words,
Their looks undaunted, warm the coldest heart
Against new dangers threat'ning. To his tent
The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes,
Exhorting thus.... 'O long-approv'd my friends,
You who have seen my father in the field
Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm
In labours not inglorious, who this day
Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd. If help
Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies
To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,
Your goddesses, your priestess half-ador'd,
The daughter of Oileus, from your swords
Protection claim against an impious foe.'

All anxious for Melissa, he dismiss'd
Th' applauding vet'rans; to the sacred cave
Then hasten'd. Under heav'n's night-shaded cope
He mus'd. Melissa in her holy place
How to approach, with inauspicious steps,
How to accost, his pensive mind revolv'd:
When Mycon, pious vassal of the fane,
Descending through the cavern, at the sight
Of Medon stopt, and thus.... 'Thy presence, lord,
The priestess calls. To Lacedæmon's king
I bear a message, snuff'ring no delay.'

He quits the chief, whose rapid feet ascend,
Soon ent'ring where the pedestal displays
Thy form, Calliopé sublime. The lyre,
Whose accents immortality confer,
The fingers seem to wake. On either side
Thy snowy gloss of Parian marble shews

Four of thy sisters through surrounding shade,
 Before each image is a virgin plac'd.
 Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
 Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
 The dead obscurity of night. Apart
 The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks
 The solemn silence.... 'Anxious for thy state,
 Without a summons, to thy pure abode
 I was approaching. Deities who know
 The present, past, and future, let my lips
 Unblam'd have utterance! Thou, my sister, hear!
 Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes
 Through Oeta now are passing!' She replies....

'Are passing, brother! They, alas, are pass'd,
 Are in possession of the upper Strait!
 Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
 A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd,
 Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
 To Phocians left, and penetrates to Greece.
 Him Mycon following, by a hostile band,
 Light arm'd forerunners of a num'rous host,
 Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd,
 He shew'd a passage up that mountain's side
 Whose length of wood o'er shades the Phocian land.
 To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts,
 Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,
 Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd,
 Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd.
 The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their post,
 Alarm'd, confus'd. More distant ground they chose.
 In blind delusion forming there, they spread
 Their ineffectual banners, to repel
 Imagin'd peril from those fraudulent lights,
 By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe
 Meantime secur'd the undefended pass.
 This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,
 He, by my orders, hastens to inform
 Leonidas.' She paus'd. Like one, who sees
 The forked lightning into shivers rive
 A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to dust,
 Aglast was Medon; then, recov'ring spake....

'Then boasted glory of th' Oilean house,

If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due
 To thy superior virtues, let his voice
 Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,
 My sister, fly. Whatever be my lot,
 A troop select of Locrians shall transport
 Thy sacred person where thy will ordains.'
 'Think not of me,' returns the dame. 'To Greece
 Direct thy zeal. My peasants are convail'd,
 That by their labour, when the fatal hour
 Requires, with massy fragments I may bar
 That cave to human entrance. Best belov'd
 Of brothers, now a serious ear incline.
 Awhile in Greece, to fortune's wanton gale,
 His golden banner shall the Persian king,
 Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death
 Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave
 To blast the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live
 To share that glory. Thee to perish here
 No law, no oracle, enjoins. To die
 Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand
 Secure Oileus from Barbarian force.
 To Sparta, mindful of her noble host,
 Entrust his rev'rend head.' Th' assembled hinds,
 Youths, maidens, wives with nurselings at their breasts,
 Around her now in consternation stood,
 The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.
 To them she turns....' You never, faithful race,
 Your priestess shall forsake. Melissa here,
 Despairing never of the public weal,
 For better days in solitude shall wait,
 Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul
 Sees through time's cloud the liberty of Greece
 More stable, more eifulent. In his blood
 Leonidas cements th' unshaken base
 Of that strong tow'r, which Athens shall exult
 To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.'

This utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost seat
 O' sanctity her solemn step she bends,
 Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps
 The pallid flames are fainting. Dim through mists
 The morning peeps. An awful silence re'gias.
 While Medon pensive from the fane descends,

But instant re-appears. Behind him close
Treads Melibœus, through the cavern's mouth
Ascending, pale in aspect; not unlike
What legends tell of spectres, by the force
Of necromantic sorcery constrain'd;
Through earth's dark bowels, which the spell disjoin'd,
They from death's mansion, in reluctant sloth,
Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves,
Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace,
Portend disast'rous tidings. Medon spake....

'Turn, holy sister. By the gods belov'd,
May they sustain thee in this mournful hour.
Our father, good Oileus, is no more!'

'Rehearse thy tidings, swain.' He takes the word....

'Thou wast not present when his mind, outstretch'd
By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot,
To his last waking moment with his guest
In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at last,
Compos'd and smiling in th' embrace of sleep,
To Pan's protection at the island fane
Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,
To you discover'd, from the chiefs I hide.'

Melissa heard, inclin'd her forehead low
Before th' insculptur'd deities. A sigh
Broke from her heart, these accents from her lips....

'The full of days and honours through the gate
Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb
Shall stand among his fathers, in the shade
Of his own trophies. Placid were his days,
Which flow'd through blessings. As a river pure,
Whose sides are flow'ry, and whose meadows fair,
Meets in his course a subterranean void;
There dips his silver head, again to rise,
And, rising, glide through flow'rs and meadows new;
So shall Oileus, in those happier fields
Where never tempests roar, nor humid clouds
In mists dissolve, nor white-descending flakes
Of winter violate th' eternal green;

Where never gloom of trouble shades the mind,
 Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,
 Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,
 Host of divine Leonidas on earth!
 Art gone before him to prepare the feast,
 Immortalizing virtue.' Silent here,
 Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.
 Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,
 Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,
 To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,
 The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils;
 Then, with a voice, a countenance, compos'd....

'Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oilean house.
 New cares, new duties, claim thy precious life.
 Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,
 Let groans, be absent from the sacred dust
 Which heav'n in life so favour'd, more in death,
 A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn,
 Like his, for Medon is Melissa's pray'r.
 Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank
 Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord.
 My benediction shall reward thy zeal.'

Sooth'd by the blessings of such perfect lips,
 They both depart. And now the climbing sun
 To Xerxes' tent discover'd from afar
 The Persian captives with their mournful load.
 Before them rumour, through her sable trump,
 Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice
 To spread the tidings of disastrous fate
 Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,
 Which from the distant, horizontal verge
 Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends
 To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,
 Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face
 Of nature saddens round; so step by step,
 In motion slow, th' advancing bier diffus'd
 A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge
 Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.
 Tears, underneath his iron-pointed cone,
 The Scian drops. The Caspian savage feels
 His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the pain.
 In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd;

Nor he forbids. His agitated breast
All night had weigh'd against his future hopes
His present losses, his defeated ranks,
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd,
His fleet thrice-worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd
To half its number. When he slept, in dreams
He saw the haggard dead, which floated round
Th' adjoining strands. Disasters new their ghosts
In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings, bode.
Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,
He in dejection had already lost
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain
And cold indifference to human woes.
Not ev'n beside his sister's nobler corpse
Her humble lover could awake his scorn.
The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;
He felt awhile compassion. But ere long
Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.
His former gloom redoubles. For himself
His anxious bosom heaves, oppress'd by fear,
Lest he, with all his splendour, should be cast
A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne
Laconia's exile waits, to whom the king....

‘ O Demaratus, what will fate ordain?
Lo! fortune turns against me. What shall check
Her further malice, when her daring stride
Invades my house with ravage, and profanes
The blood of great Darius? I have sent
From my unguarded side the chosen band,
My bravest chiefs, to pass the desert hill;
I have to the conduct of a Malian spy
My hopes intrusted. May not there the Greeks,
In opposition more tremendous still,
More ruinous, than yester sun beheld,
Maintain their post invincible, renew
Their stony thunder in augmented rage,
And send whole quarries down the craggy steeps,
Again to crush my army? Oh! unfold
Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the harshest truth.
Say, what remains to hope? The exile here....

‘ Too well, O monarch, do thy fears presage
What may befall thy army. If the Greeks,

Arrang'd within Thermopylae, a pass
 Accessible and practis'd, could repel
 With such destruction their unnumber'd foes,
 What scenes of havock may untrodden paths,
 Contin'd among the craggy hills, afford?"

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.
 Not less unnumber'd than Xerxes, from his place
 Uprose Argestes; but, concealing fear,
 These artful words deliver'd.... 'If the king,
 Propitious, wills to spare his faithful hands,
 Nor spread at large the terrors of his pow'r,
 More gentle means of conquest than by arms,
 Nor less secure, may artifice supply.
 Renown'd Darius, thy immortal sire,
 Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
 The fields of proud Euphrates with his host
 O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles
 Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdu'd
 The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count
 The thrones and states by stratagem o'erturn'd?
 But, if corruption join her pow'rful aid,
 Not one can stand. What race of men possess
 That probity, that wisdom, which the veil
 Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,
 Nor splendid pow'r, seduce? O Xerxes, born
 To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find,
 Through thy unbounded sway, no dazzling gift
 Which may allure Leonidas? Dispel
 The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes,
 Great Monarch, proffer to Laconia's chief
 What may thy own magnificence declare,
 And win his friendship. O'er his native Greece
 Invest him sov'reign. Thus procure his sword
 For thy succeeding conquests.' Xerxes here,
 As from a trance awak'ning, swift replies....

'Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.
 Argestes, fall before him. Bid him join
 My arms, and reign o'er ev'ry Grecian state.'

He scarce had finish'd, when in haste approach'd
 Artuchus. Startled at the ghastly stage
 Of death, that guardian of the Persian fair
 Thus in a groan.... 'Thou deity malign,

O Arianius, what a bitter draught
 For my sad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd !
 Is this the flow'r of women to my charge
 So lately giv'n ? Oh ! princess, I have rang'd
 The whole Spetchean valley, woods and caves,
 In quest of thee, found here a lifeless corse.
 Astonishment and horror lock my tongue.'

Pride now, reviving in the monarch's breast,
 Dispell'd his black despondency awhile,
 With gall more black effacing from his heart
 Each merciful impression. Stern he spake....

' Remove her, satrap, to the female train.
 Let them the due solemnities perform.
 But never she, by Mithra's light I swear,
 Shall sleep in Snsa with her kindred dust,
 Who by ignoble passions hath debas'd
 The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her shame ;
 Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born slave,
 Who dar'd to Xerxes' sister lift his hopes,
 On some bare crag expose.' The Spartan here....

' My royal patron, let me speak....and die,
 If such thy will. This cold, disfigur'd clay
 Was late thy soldier, gallantly who fought,
 Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend
 Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life
 Now in thy cause. O'er Persians thou dost reign ;
 None more than Persians venerate the brave !'

' Well hath he spoke,' Artuchus firm subjoins.
 ' But, if the king his rigour will inflict
 On this dead warrior, Heav'n o'erlook the deed,
 Nor on our heads accumulate fresh woes !
 The shatter'd fleet, th' intimidated camp,
 The band select, through Oeta's dang'rous wilds
 At this dread crisis struggling, must obtain
 Support from heav'n, or Asia's glory falls.'

Fell pride, recoiling at these awful words
 In Xerxes' frozen bosom, yields to fear,
 Resuming there the sway. He grants the corse
 To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves
 Behind the bier, uplifted by his train.

Argestes, parted from his master's side,
 Ascends a car ; and, speeding o'er the beach,

Sees Artemisia. She the ashes pale
Of slaughter'd Carians, on the pyre consum'd,
Was then collecting for the fun'ral vase,
In exclamation thus....' My subjects, lost
On earth, descend to happier climes below....
The fawning, dastard counsellors, who left
Your worth deserted in the hour of need,
May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour....
Shade of my husband, thou salute in smiles
These gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
Nor less to me. 'They tidings will report
Of Artemisia, to revive thy love....
May wretches like Argestes never clasp
'Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
May their unbury'd limbs dismiss their ghosts
To wait for ever on the banks of Styx!'

Then, turning tow'rd her son....' Come, virtuous boy,
Let us transport these reliques of our friends
To yon tall bark, in pendant sable clad.
'They, if her keel be destin'd to return,
Shall in paternal monuments repose.
Let us embark. Till Xerxes shuts his ear
To false Argestes, in her vessel hid,
Shall Artemisia's gratitude lament
Her bounteous sov'reign's fate. Leander, mark.
The Doric virtues are not eastern plants.
Them foster still within thy gen'rous breast;
But keep in covert from the blaze of courts;
Where flattery's guile, in oily words profuse,
In action tardy, o'er th' ingenuous tongue,
The arm of valour, and the faithful heart,
Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys
Her own presage, that destiny reserves
An hour for my revenge.' Concluding here,
She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along
On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view;
Like night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,
With treason, rape, and murder, at her heel,
Before the eye of morn retreating swift,
To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd
Thermopylæ; descending from his car,
Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent

Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news
 By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
 With Polydorns had consulted long
 On high attempts; and, now sequester'd, sat
 To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet
 Prone fell the satrap, and began.... 'The will
 Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth
 Before thy presence. Great and matchless chief,
 Thus says the lord of Asia, "Join my arms;
 Thy recompence is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
 Her gen'rous steeds, her flocks, her num'rous towns,
 Her sons, I render to thy sov'reign hand."
 And, O illustrious warrior, heed my words.
 Think on the bliss of royalty, the pomp
 Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,
 Who restless watch for thee and thy delights.
 Think on the glories of unrival'd sway.
 Look on the Ionic, on the Æolian Greeks.
 From them their phantom liberty is flown;
 While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' pow'r,
 Some favour'd chief presides; exalted state,
 Ne'er giv'n by envious freedom. On his head
 He bears the gorgeous diadem; he sees
 His equals once in adoration stoop
 Beneath his footstool. What superior beams
 Will from thy temples blaze, when gen'ral Greece,
 In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord,
 Thee only worthy! How will each rejoice
 Around thy throne, and hail the auspicious day
 When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,
 Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless,
 Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
 Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames!'

Leonidas replies not, but commands
 The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,
 To summon all the Grecians. He obeys.
 The king uprises from his seat, and bids
 The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,
 Surrounded soon by each assembling band;
 When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake....

'Here, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat
 That, to obtain my friendship, Asia's priuce

To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.
 Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
 That Greece unconquer'd which your king bestows;
 Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains.
 The indignation, painted on their looks,
 Their gen'rous scorn, may answer for their chief.
 Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
 To vassalage and baseness, hear....The pomp,
 The arts of pleasure in despotic courts,
 I spurn, abhorrent! In a spotless heart
 I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds
 Derive my splendour. No adoring crowd,
 No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears,
 My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule
 By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown
 To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
 No pale suspicion of th' empoison'd bowl,
 Th' assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt,
 Chase from my decent couch the peace deny'd
 To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,
 Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
 Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling slave,
 Whose embassy was treason, I despise,
 And therefore spare.' Diomedon subjoins....

' Our marble temples these Barbarians waste,
 A crime less impious than a bare attempt
 Of sacrilege on virtue! Grant my suit,
 Thou living temple, where the goddess dwells.
 To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds
 Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's tallest pine.'

Amidst his fury suddenly return'd
 The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd
 On him their eyes impatient. He began....

' I am return'd a messenger of ill.
 Close to the passage, op'ning into Greece,
 That post committed to the Phocian guard,
 O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there
 Behind the shrubs by dead of night I took,
 Though not in darkness. Purple was the face
 Of heav'n. Beneath my feet the valleys glow'd.
 A range immense of wood-invested hills,
 The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames;

An act of froward chance, or crafty foes,
 To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard;
 Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
 In hillocks embers rose. Embody'd fire,
 As from unnumber'd furnaces, I saw
 Mount high, through vacant trunks of headless oaks,
 Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helms,
 Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below,
 Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight
 The straits in Persia's pow'r. The Phocian chief,
 Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,
 Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd;
 There, by the foe neglected or contemn'd,
 Remain'd in arms, and neither fled nor fought.
 I stay'd for day-spring; then the Persians mov'd.
 To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.'

He said no more. Unutterable fear
 In horrid silence wraps the list'ning crowd,
 Aghast, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,
 Who feel no terror; yet, in wonder fix'd,
 Thick-wedg'd, enclose Leonidas around,
 Who thus in calmest elocation spake....

' I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.
 Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,
 Which shalt my country's liberty secure.
 Thrice hail, thou solemn period! Thee the tongues
 Of virtue, fame, and freedom, shall proclaim,
 Shall celebrate, in ages yet unborn.
 Thou godlike offspring of a godlike sire,
 To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.
 Farewell, Megistias, holy friend, and brave!
 Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief,
 Demophilus, farewell! Farewell to thee,
 Invincible Diomedon! to thee,
 Unequal'd Dithyrambus! and to all,
 Ye other dauntless warriors, who may claim
 Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart,
 You, after all the wonders which your swords
 Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names
 Py fresh renown. Your valour must complete
 What our's begins. Here first th' astonish'd foe
 On dying Spartans shall, with terror, gaze

And tremble, while he conquers. Then, by fate
Led from his dreadful victory to meet
United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,
By your avenging spears himself shall fall.'

Forth from th' assembly strides Plataea's chief....
' By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n supreme,
By my fair name, unsully'd yet, I swear
Thine eye, Leonidas, shall ne'er behold
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength
Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart.
Did I not face the Marathonian war?
Have I not seen Thermopylae? What more
Can fame bestow, which I should wait to share?
Where can I, living, purchase brighter praise
Than dying here? What more illustrious tomb
Can I obtain, than, bury'd in the heaps
Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock
To lie, distinguish'd by a thousand wounds?'

He ended; when Demophilus.... ' O king
Of Lacedaemon, pride of human race,
Whom none e'er equal'd but the seed of Jove,
Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,
Lo, I am old! With falt'ring steps I tread
The prone descent of years. My country claim'd
My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields
An empty name of service. What remains
For me, unequal to the winged speed
Of active hours, which court the swift and young?
What eligible wish can wisdom form,
But to die well? Demophilus shall close
With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth,
His eve of life.' The youth of Thespia next
Address'd Leonidas.... ' O first of Greeks,
Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
With this most dear, this venerable man,
For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,
Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.
Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd.
Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark
My youthful limbs among the gory heaps,
Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm
In future fields of contest with a race,

To whom the flow'r, the blooming joys, of life
Are less alluring than a noble death.'

To him his second parent....' Wilt thou bleed,
My Dithyrambus? But I here withhold
All counsel from thee, who art wise as brave.
I know thy magnanimity. I read
Thy gen'rous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.
Come then, attendants on a godlike shade,
When to th' Elysian ancestry of Greece
Descends her great protector, we will shew
To Harmatides an illustrious son,
And no unworthy brother. We will link
Our shields together. We will press the ground,
Still undivided in the arms of death.
So, if th' attentive traveller we draw
To our cold reliques, wond'ring, shall he trace
The diff'rent scene; then, pregnant with applause,
"O wise old man," exclaim, "the hour of fate
Well didst thou choose; and, O unequal'd youth,
Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote,
Mayst thou remain for ever dear to fame!
May time rejoice to name thee! O'er thy urn
May everlasting peace her pinion spread".'

This said, the hero with his lifted shield
His face o'ershades; he drops a secret tear:
Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd
From fond affection, grown mature with time,
Awak'd a manly tenderness alone,
Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

A stream of duty, gratitude, and love,
Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' son,
Addressing straight Leonidas, whose looks
Declar'd unspeakable applause....' O king
Of Lacedæmon, now distribute praise
From thy accustom'd justice, small to me,
To him a portion large. His guardian care,
His kind instruction, his example, train'd
My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd
To live unspotted. Could I less than learn
From him to die with honour? Medon hears.
Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts,
Strong heaves his manly bosom, under awe

Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd
 By such example high. In dubious state
 So rolls a vessel, when th' inflated waves
 Her planks assail, and winds her canvass rend;
 The rudder labours, and requires a hand
 Of firm, delib'rate skill. The gen'rous king
 Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares
 To interpose relief; when instant came
 Dieneces before them. Short he spake....

' Barbarian myriads through the secret pass
 Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn
 Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd.
 There to have died was useless. We return
 With thee to perish. Union of our strength
 Will render more illustrious to ourselves,
 And to the foe more terrible, our fall.'

Megistias last accosts Laconia's king....
 ' Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt
 Above mankind in virtue and renown,
 O call not me presumptuous, who implore
 Among these heroes thy regardful ear.
 To Lacedæmon I a stranger came,
 There found protection. There to honours rais'd,
 I have not yet the benefit repaid.
 That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold
 In me their large beneficence not vain,
 Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.'

' Not so, Megistias,' interpos'd the king.
 ' Thou and thy son retire.' Again the seer....

' Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd,
 O Jove, confirm my persevering soul;
 Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,
 When to my bounteous patrons I may shew
 That I deserv'd their favour. Thou, my child,
 Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,
 And my paternal tenderness revere.
 Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use
 Thy arms surrend'ring. Fortune will supply
 New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find
 A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye
 The bitter anguish to behold thy youth
 Untimely bleed before him.' Grief suspends

His speech, and interchangeably their arms
Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,
The hoary parent and the blooming son.

But from his temples the pontific wreath
Megi has now unloosens. He resigns
His hallow'd vestments; while the youth in tears
The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,
O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.

Dieneces was nigh. Oppress'd by shame,
His downcast visage Menclippus hid
From him, who cheerful thus.... 'Thou need'st not blush,
Thou hear'st thy father and the king command
What I suggested, thy departure hence.
Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st.
Go, practise my instructions. Oit in fields
Of future conflict may thy prowess call
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewell!'

While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
To die with glory, animate the Greeks,
Far different thoughts possess Argestes' soul.
Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.
Cold drops, distill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew
His shiv'ring flesh. His bosom pants. His knees
Yield to their burthen. Ghastly pale his cheeks;
Pale are his lips, and trembling. Such the minds
Of slaves corrupt; on them the beauteous face
Of virtue turns to horror. But these words
From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relieve....

'Return to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock
The Grecians, faithful to their trust, await
His chosen myriads. Tell him thou hast seen
How far the lust of empire is below
A freeborn spirit; that my death, which seals
My country's safety, is indeed a boon
His folly gives; a precious boon, which Greece
Will by perdition to his throne repay.'

He said. The Persian hastens through the pass.
Once more the stern Diomedon arose.
Wrath overcast his forehead while he spake....

'Yet more must stay and bleed. Detested Thebes
Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot
Shall see their perfidy aton'd by death,

Ev'n from that pow'r to which their abject hearts
 Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope,
 Ye vile deserters of the public weal,
 Ye coward slaves, that, mingled in the heaps
 Of gen'rous victims to their country's good,
 You shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass
 Along this field of glorious slain, and mark
 For veneration ev'ry nobler corse,
 His heart, though warm in rapturous applause,
 Awhile shall curb the transport, to repeat
 His execrations o'er such impious heads,
 On whom that fate, to others yielding fame,
 Is infamy and vengeance.' Dreadful thus
 On the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd.
 Like Rhadamanthus, from th' infernal seat
 Of judgment, which inexorably dooms
 The guilty dead to ever-during pain;
 While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls
 Before their sight, and ruthless furies shake
 Their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent
 In clamours, echoing through the concave rock.
 Forth Anaxander in th' assembly stood,
 Which he address'd with indignation feign'd.

' If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
 Lo! I appear before you to demand
 Why these my brave companions, who alone
 Among the Thebans, through dissuading crowds,
 Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear
 The name of traitors? By an exil'd wretch
 We are traduc'd; by Demaratus driv'n
 From Spartan confines, who hath meanly sought
 Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn
 Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
 Held him unworthy of his native sway,
 Should trust him now, and doubt auxiliar friends?
 Injurious man! We scorn the thoughts of flight.
 Let Asia bring her numbers; unconstrain'd,
 We will confront them, and for Greece expire.'

Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
 Necessity. Laconia's king perceiv'd,
 Through all its fair disguise, the traitor's heart.
 So, when at first mankind in science rude

Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,
 Some sage who walk'd with nature through her works,
 By wisdom led, discern'd the various orb,
 Dark in itself, in foreign splendours clad.

Leonidas concludes.... 'Ye Spartans, hear;
 Hear you, O Grecians, in our lot by choice
 Partakers, destin'd to enrol your names
 In time's eternal record, and enhance
 Your country's lustre: lo! the noontide blaze
 Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire;
 Each in his tent invoke the pow'r of sleep,
 To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength
 For long endurance. When the sun descends,
 Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies
 Of Corinth Phlius, and Mycenæ's towers,
 Arcadians, Locrians, must not yet depart.
 While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat
 When we our tents abandon. I resign
 To great Oileus' son supreme command.
 Take my embraces, Æschylus. The fleet
 Expects thee. To Themistocles report
 What thou hast seen and heard.' 'O thrice farewell!
 Th' Athenian answer'd.... 'To yourselves, my friends,
 Your virtues immortality secure,
 Your bright examples victory to Greece.'

Retaining these injunctions, all dispers'd;
 While in his tent Leonidas remain'd
 Apart with Agis, whom he thus bespake....
 'Yet in our fall the pond'rous hand of Greece
 Shall Asia feel. This Persian's welcome tale
 Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,
 As by the force of sorcery, will wrap
 Security around her, will suppress
 All sense, all thought of danger. Brother, know
 That, soon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n
 Withdraws her shining lamp, through Asia's host
 Shall massacre and desolation rage.
 Yet not to base associates will I trust
 My vast design. Their perfidy might warn
 The unsuspecting foe, our fairest fruits
 Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,
 While, on the solemn sacrifice intent,

As Lacedæmon's ancient laws ordain,
Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,
Thou whisper, through the willing ranks of Thebes,
Slow, and in silence, to disperse and fly.'

Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
The Spartan king thus meditates alone....

' My fate is now impending. O my soul,
What more auspicious period couldst thou choose
For death than now, when, beating high in joy,
Thou tell'st me I am happy? If to live,
Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
The purest bliss; if she her charms displays,
Still lovely, still unfading, still serene,
To youth, to age, to death; whatever be
Those other climes of happiness unchang'd,
Which heaven in dark futurity conceals,
Still here, O virtue, thou art all our good.
Oh! what a black, unspeakable reverse
Must the unrighteous, must the tyrant prove;
What in the struggle of departing day,
When life's last glimpse, extinguishing, presents
Unknown, inextricable gloom? But how
Can I explain the terrors of a breast
Where guilt resides? Leonidas, forego
The horrible conception, and again
Within thy own felicity retire;
Bow grateful down to him, who form'd thy mind
Of crimes unfruitful, never to admit
The black impression of a guilty thought.
Else could I fearless, by delib'rate choice,
Relinquish life? This calm from minds deprav'd
Is ever absent. Oft in them the force
Of some prevailing passion for a time
Suppresses fear. Precipitate they lose
The sense of danger; when dominion, wealth,
Or purple pomp, enchant the dazzled sight,
Pursuing still the joys of life alone.
But he, who calmly seeks a certain death,
When duty only, and the gen'ral good,
Direct his courage, must a soul possess,
Which, all content deducing from itself,
Can, by unerring virtue's constant light,

Discern when death is worthy of his choice.
The man, thus great and happy, in the scope
Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date.
Ev'n on this shore of being he in thought,
Supremely bless'd, anticipates the good,
Which late posterity from him derives.'

At length the hero's meditations close.
The swelling transport of his heart subsides
In soft oblivion; and the silken plumes
Of sleep envelope his extended limbs.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XI.

The Argument.

Leonidas, rising before sun-set, dismisses the forces under the command of Medon ; but, observing a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewell. He then relates to his own select band a dream, which is interpreted by Megistias ; arms himself, and marches, in procession with his whole troop, to an altar newly raised on a neighbouring meadow ; there offers a sacrifice to the muses ; he invokes the assistance of those goddesses ; he animates his companions ; then, placing himself at their head, leads them against the enemy in the dead of the night.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XI.

THE day was closing. Agis left his tent.
He sought his godlike brother. Him he found
Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd
The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts,
To gladden sleep. So smile soft evening skies,
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd
The eye of Agis; friendship swell'd his heart;
His yielding knee in veneration bent;
The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus....

‘O excellence ineffable, receive
This secret homage; and may gentle sleep
Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
I may fall down before thee.’ He concludes
In adoration of his friend divine,
Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
So, when the rising sun resumes his state,
Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates' side,
Or Indian seer on Ganges, prostrate falls
Before th' emerging glory, to salute
That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.

Uprise both heroes. From their tents in arms
Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks
Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.
Melissa's dictates he forgets awhile.
All inattentive to the warning voice
Of Melibœus, earnest he surveys
Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
In good Oileus' offspring brings the sire
To full remembrance in that solemn hour,
And draws these cordial accents from the king....

‘Approach me, Locrian. In thy look I trace
Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,

Against thy gen'ral's orders wouldst thou stay?
 Go, prove to kind Oileus that my heart
 Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
 I barr'd against his son. You gallant Greeks,
 To thy commanding care from mine transferr'd,
 Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
 To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy sire.
 Say to her senate, to her people tell,
 Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king,
 On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.'

The Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies....
 ' My sire, left slumb'ring in the island-fane,
 Awoke no more.' ' Then joyful I shall meet
 Him soon,' the king made answer. ' Let thy worth
 Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
 Thee live. Farewell.' Now Medon's grief, o'er-aw'd
 By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind
 To firm decision. He departs, prepar'd
 For all the duties of a man, by deeds
 To prove himself the friend of Sparta's king,
 Melissa's brother, and Oileus' son.

The gen'rous victims of the public weal,
 Assembled now, Leonidas salutes,
 His pregnant soul disburd'ning.... ' O, thrice hail!
 Surround me, Grecians; to my words attend....
 This evening's sleep no sooner press'd my brows,
 Than o'er my head the empyreal form
 Of heav'n-enthron'd Alcides was display'd.
 I saw his magnitude divine. His voice
 I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.
 I rose. He bade me follow. I obey'd.
 A mountain's summit, clear'd from mist or cloud,
 We reach'd in silence. Suddenly the howl
 Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,
 The yell of ev'ry beast and bird of prey,
 Discordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
 A surface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood,
 Beyond my view illimitably stretch'd,
 One vast expanse of horror. There, supine,
 Of huge dimension, cov'ring half the plain,
 A giant corse lay mangled, red with wounds,
 Delv'd in th' enormous flesh, which, bubbling, fed

Ten thousand thousand grisly beaks and jaws,
 Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd;
 When from behind I heard a second sound,
 Like surges tumbling o'er a craggy shore.
 Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd
 With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd oars,
 With arms and weltring carcasses bestrewn,
 Innumerable. The billows foam'd in blood.
 But where the waters, unobserv'd before,
 Between two adverse shores, contracting roll'd
 A stormy current, on the beach forlorn
 One of majestic stature I descri'd,
 In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent
 On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name
 He sounded forth in execrations loud;
 Then rent his splendid garments; then his head
 In rage divested of its graceful hairs.
 Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,
 Which, mounted high on boist'rous waves, approach'd.
 With indignation, with reluctant grief,
 Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd
 Amid the perils of the frowning deep.
 "O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,"
 I here exclaim'd, "instruct me. What produc'd
 This desolation?" Hereules reply'd;
 "Let thy astonish'd eye again survey
 The scene thy soul abhorr'd." I look'd. I saw
 A land where plenty with disporting hands,
 Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;
 Where bloom'd the olive; where the clust'ring vine
 With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill;
 Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd
 The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold;
 Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
 The dazzling works of wealth, along the banks
 Of copious rivers shew'd their stately tow'rs,
 The strength and splendour of the peopled land.
 Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my view;
 At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.
 'Thrice I saluted the omen,' loud began
 The sage Megistias. 'In this mystic dream
 I see my country's victories. The land,

The deep, shall own her triumphs; while the tears
Of Asia and of Libya shall deplore
Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak,
And ev'ry monstrous native of the main.
These joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,
Enrich'd by conquest and Barbarian spoils.
He, whom thou saw'st, in regal vesture clad,
Print on the sand his solitary step,
Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive.' So spake
The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry bosom felt
Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond
All sense and all conception, but of those
Who die to save their country. Here again
Th' exulting band Leonidas address'd....

' Since happiness from virtue is deriv'd....
Who for his country dies, that moment proves
Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
But go, Megistias; instantly prepare
The sacred fuel, and the victim due,
That to the muses (so by Sparta's law
We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid
Before we march. Remember, from the rites
Let ev'ry sound be absent; not the fife,
Not ev'n the music-breathing flute, be heard.
Meantime, ye leaders, ev'ry band instruct
To move in silence.' Mindful of their charge,
The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
His various armour. Agis close attends,
His best assistant. First a breastplate arms
The spacious chest. O'er this the hero spreads
The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.
A shining belt infolds his mighty loins.
Next, on his stately temples he erects
The plumed helm; then grasps his pond'rous shield;
Where, nigh the centre, on projecting brass,
Th' inimitable artist had emboss'd
The shape of great Alcides, whom to gain
Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here
Won, by soft wiles, th' attracted eye; and there
The form of Virtue dignify'd the scene.
In her majestic sweetness was display'd
The mind sublime and happy. From her lips

Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene,
 But fix'd intensely on the son of Jove,
 She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,
 Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,
 Supported by a trophy near to heaven,
 Fame, and protended her eternal trump.
 The youth, attentive to her wisdom, own'd
 The prevalence of Virtue; while his eye,
 Till'd by that spirit which redeem'd the world
 From tyranny and monsters, darted flames,
 Not undescri'd by Pleasure, where she lay
 Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
 Were flow'rets strewn, and wantonly in rills
 A fount meander'd. All relax'd her limbs;
 Nor wanting yet solicitude to gain,
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair,
 Sae seem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm:
 Excess of sweet allurement she diffus'd
 In vain. Still Vir ue sway'd Alcides' mind.
 Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,
 The shield's external surface they enrich'd.

This portraiture of glory on his arm
 Leonidas displays, and, tow'ring, strides
 From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
 The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze
 Through ev'ry file. All now in silent pace
 To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.
 First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,
 The sacred salt and barley. At his side
 Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.
 The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest
 In polish'd armour. White as winter's fleece,
 A fillet round his shining helm reveals
 The sacerdotal honours. By the horns,
 Where laurels twine, with Alpheus, Maron leads
 The consecrated ox. And lo! behind
 Leonidas advances. Never he
 In such transcendent majesty was seen,
 And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.
 Successive move Dienece the brave;
 In hoary state Demophilus; the bloom
 Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope

Of future praise; the gen'rous Agis next,
Serene and graceful; last the Theban chiefs,
Repining ignominious; then slow march
The troops, all mute, nor shake their brazen arms.

Not from Thermopylæ remote, the hills
Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
Within their side, half-circling, had enclos'd
A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds
Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs,
Which from the clouds bent, frowning. Down a rock,
Above the loftiest summit of the grove,
A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone;
Then, gleaming through the intervals of shade,
Attain'd the valley, where the level stream
Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks
Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.
Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,
All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd
Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase
Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd
Before the altar; and of wine unmix'd
Capacious goblets stood. Megistias now
His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head
Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod.
He shook a branch of laurel, scatt'ring wide
The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd
The mingled salt and barley. O'er the horns
Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape,
Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.
Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,
Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat
His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd.
Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad
In sudden splendour. Deep in circling ranks
The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling brand;
The beaming lances intermix'd; the helms,
The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze.
Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
The casque to Agis he consign'd; his shield,

His spear, to Dithyrambus; then, his arms
Extending, forth in supplication broke...

‘ Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove,
Who, on the top of Helicon ador’d,
And high Parnassus, with delighted ears
Bend to the warble of Castalia’s stream,
Of Aganippe’s murmur, if from thence
We must invoke your presence, or along
The neighb’ring mountains with propitious steps
If now you grace your consecrated bow’rs,
Look down, ye Muses; nor disdain to stand
Each an immortal witness of our fate.
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove
And you must honour. Let her sacred eyes
Approve her dying Grecians; let her voice
In exultation tell the earth and heav’ns
These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells.
Record us guardians of our parents’ age,
Our matrons’ virtue, and our children’s bloom,
The glorious bulwarks of our country’s laws,
Who shall ennoble the historian’s page,
Shall on the joyous festival inspire
With loftier strains the virgin’s choral song.
Then, O celestial maids, on yonder camp
Let night sit heavy. Let a sleep like death
Weigh down the eye of Asia. O infuse
A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts,
Which may in silence guide our daring feet,
Control our fury, nor by tumult wild
The friendly dark affright, till dying groans
Of slaughter’d tyrants into horror wake
The midnight calm; then turn destruction loose.
Let terror, let confusion, rage around;
In one vast ruin heap the barb’rous ranks,
Their horse, their chariots. Let the spurning steed
Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the shatter’d cars
Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks
Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,
By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends,
My last commands retain. Your gen’ral’s voice
Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,
Or minds resolv’d and dauntless to confirm,

Too well by this expiring blaze I see
Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.
O temper well that ardour, and your lips
Close on the rising transport. Mark how sleep
Hath folded millions in its black embrace.
No sound is wafted from th' unnumber'd foe.
The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
Shall only wake to die. Their crowded train
This night perhaps to Pluto's dreary shades
Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd
From this destruction to lament a doom
Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r
Which we will shake. But look, the setting moon
Shuts on our darksome paths her waning horns.
Let each his head distinguish by a wreath
Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,
Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast;
With your forefathers, and the heroes old,
You next will banquet in the bless'd abodes.'

Here ends their leader. Through th' encircling crowd
The agitation of their spears denotes
High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines
Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow.
The Acarnanian seer distributes swift
The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
Around each helm the woven leaves unite
Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.
Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl
Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof
The Theban train, in wan dejection mute,
Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks
On that determin'd courage which, unmov'd
At fate's approach, with cheerful lips could taste
The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake
That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,
Regardful ever of the king's command,
Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus....
' Leonidas permits you to retire.

While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
None heed your motions. Separate, and fly
In silent pace.' This heard, th' inglorious troop,
Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw.
Unseen they moulder from the host, like snow,
Freed from the rigour of constraining frost;
Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
The transitory landscape melts in rills
Away; and structures, which delude the eye,
Insensibly are lost. The solemn feast
Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king
Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step
The crowd roll backward. In their gladden'd sight
His crest, illumina'd by nplifted brands,
Its purple splendour shakes. The tow'ring oak
Thus from a lofty promontory waves
His majesty of verdure. As with joy
The sailors mark his heav'n-ascending pride,
Which from afar directs their foamy course
Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks
In transport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks
The king proceeds; from whose superior frame
A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive,
In Parian marble or effulgent brass,
The form of great Apollo; when the god,
Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
In arms forsook his lucid throne, to pierce
The monster Python in the Delphian vale.
Close by the hero Polydorus waits,
To guide destruction through the Asian tents.
As the young eagle near his parent's side
In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wing,
Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds,
To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
And dye his beak in gore; by Sparta's king
The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
His arm for death. He feasts his angry soul
On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts
Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat
Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,
But now once more a Spartan, with his spear,
His shield, restor'd, to lead his country's bands,

And with them devastation. Nor the rest
Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend
The various plumes, as intermingling oaks
Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove;
Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills
Their shady texture spread. Once more the king,
O'er all the phalanx his consid'rate view
Extending, through the ruddy gleam descries
One face of gladness; but the godlike van
He most contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,
Megistias, Maron, with Plataea's chief,
Dieneces, Demophilus, are seen
With Thespia's youth: nor they their steady sight
From his remove, in speechless transport bound
By love, by veneration, till they hear
His last injunction. To their diff'rent posts
They sep'rate. Instant on the dewy turf
Are east th' extinguish'd brands. On all around
Drops sudden darkness; on the wood, the hill,
The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver stream.
It verg'd on midnight. Tow'rd the hostile camp,
In march compos'd and silent, down the pass
The phalanx mov'd. Each patient bosom hush'd
In struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd
The rapt'rous ardour virtue then inspir'd.
So low'ring clouds along th' ethereal void,
In slow expansion, from the gloomy north
Awhile suspend their horrors, destin'd soon
To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XII.

The Argument.

Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The Barbarians are slaughtered in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylæ; engages the Persians who were descended from the hills; and, after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour, sinks down covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK XII.

A CROSS th' unguarded bound of Asia's camp
Slow pass the Grecians. Through innum'rous tents,
Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of sleep lie millions motionless and deaf,
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorns guided, still proceed.
Ev'n to the centre of th' extensive host
They pierce unseen; when lo! th' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round
Th' august pavilion, was an ample space
For thousands in arrangement. Here a band
Of chosen Persians, watchful o'er the king,
Held their nocturnal station. As the hearts
Of anxious nations, whom th' unsparing sword
Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight
Of fear-engender'd phantoms in the sky,
Aerial hosts amid the clouds array'd,
Portending wo and death; the Persian guard
In equal consternation now descry'd
The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks,
Pan held their banner, scattering from its folds
Fear and confusion, which to Xerxes' couch,
Swi t-wing'd, fly; thence shake the gen'ral camp,
Whose numbers issue naked, pale, unarm'd,
Wild in amazement, blinded by dismay,
To ev'ry foe obnoxious. In the breasts
Of thousands, gor'd at once, the Grecian steel
Reeks in destruction. Deluges of blood
Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps
Of wretches slain, unconscious of the hand
Which wastes their helpless multitude. Amaze,

Affright, distraction, from his pillow chase
The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds
United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r!
Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown,
With all thy pomp? In this disastrous hour
What could avail th' immeasurable range
Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal
Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'st?
To thy deserted couch, with other looks,
With other steps, Leonidas is nigh.
Before him terror strides. Gigantic death
And desolation at his side attend.

The vast pavilion's empty space, where lamps
Of gold shed light and odours, now admits
The hero. Ardent throngs behind him press,
But miss their victim. To the ground are hurl'd
The glitt'ring ensigns of imperial state.
The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd
Through boundless kingdoms, underneath their feet,
In mingled rage and scorn, the warriors crush,
A sacrifice to freedom. They return
Again to form. Leonidas exalts
For new destruction his resistless spear;
When double darkness suddenly descends.
The clouds, condensing, intercept the stars.
Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east
In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. The coasts resound
The cavern'd rocks, the crashing forests, roar.
Swift through the camp the hurricane impels
Its rude career; when Asia's numbers, veil'd
Amid the shelt'ring horrors of the storm,
Evade the victor's lance. The Grecians halt;
While to their gen'ral's pregnant mind occurs
A new attempt and vast. Perpetual fire
Beside the tent of Xerxes, from the hour
He lodg'd his standards on the Malian plains,
Had shone. Among his Magi, to adore
Great Hormazes was the monarch wont
Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood
Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.
On living embers these are cast. So wills
Leonidas. The phalanx then divides,

Your troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last
Himself conducts. The word is giv'n. They seize
The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,
Destructive fire is brandish'd. All, enjoin'd
To reassemble at the regal tent,
By various paths the hostile camp invade.

Now devastation, unconfin'd, involves
The Malian fields. Among Barbarian tents,
From diff'rent stations, fly consuming flames.
The Greeks afford no respite; and the storm
Exasperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
The conflagration like a sea expands,
One waving surface of unbounded fire.
In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames
To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
So, when the north emits his purpled lights,
The undulated radiance, streaming wide,
As with a burning canopy, invests
Th' ethereal concave. Oeta now disclos'd
His forehead, glitt'ring in eternal frost,
While down his rocks the foamy torrents shone.
Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;
Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast;
The billows glimmer'd from the distant shores.

But lo! a pillar huge of smoke ascends,
Which overshades the field. There horror, there
Leonidas, presides. Command he gave
To Polydorus, who, exulting, shew'd
Where Asia's horse and warlike cars possess'd
A crowded station. At the hero's nod
Devouring Vulcan riots on the stores
Of Ceres, empty'd of the ripen'd grain,
On all the tribute from her meadows brown,
By rich Thessalia render'd to the scythe.
A flood of fire envelopes all the ground.
The cordage bursts around the blazing tents.
Down sink the roofs on suffocate'd throngs,
Close-wedg'd by fear. The Libyan chariot burns.
Th' Arabian camel and the Persian steed
Bound through a burning deluge. Wild with pain,
They shake their singed manes. Their madding hoofs

Dash through the blood of thousands, mix'd with flames,
Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blast.

Meantime the sceptred lord of half the globe
From tent to tent precipitates his flight.
Dispers'd are all his satraps. Pride herself
Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone
Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and shews
As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves,
No limits to destruction. Now is seen
Aurora, mounting from her eastern hill
In rosy sandals, and with dewy locks.
The winds subside before her; darkness flies;
A stream of light proclaims the cheerful day,
Which sees at Xerxes' tent the conqu'ring bands,
All reunited. What could fortune more
To aid the valiant, what to gorge revenge?
Lo! desolation o'er the adverse host
Hath empty'd all her terrors. Ev'n the hand
Of languid slaughter dropt the crimson steel;
Nor nature longer can sustain the toil
Of unremitted conquest. Yet what pow'r
Among these sons of Liberty reviv'd
Their drooping warmth, new-strung their nerves, re-
call'd -

Their weary'd swords to deeds of brighter fame?
What, but th' inspiring hope of glorious death
To crown their labours, and th' auspicious look
Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,
Still in superior majesty, declar'd
No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength,
Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.

Back to the pass, in gentle march, he leads
Th' embattled warriors. They behind the shrubs,
Where Melon sent such numbers to the shades,
In ambush lie. The tempest is o'erblown.
Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,
Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,
A crystal rill near Oeta's verdant feet,
Dispel the languor from their harass'd nerves,
Fresh brace'd by strength returning. O'er their heads,
Lo! in full blaze of majesty appears

Melissa, bearing in her hand divine
 Th' eternal guardian of illustrious deeds,
 The sweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train
 Of white-rob'd virgins, seated on a range
 Half down the cliff, o'ershadowing the Greeks,
 All with concordant strings and accents clear,
 A torrent pour of melody, and swell
 A high, triumphal, solemn, dirge of praise,
 Anticipating fame. Of endless joys
 In bless'd Elysium was the song....⁴ Go, meet
 Iyurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus sage,
 Let them salute the children of their laws.
 Meet Homer, Orpheus, and th' Ascræan bard,
 Who, with a spirit of ambrosial food
 Refin'd and more exalted, shall contend
 Your splendid fate to warble through the bow'rs
 Of amaranth and myrtle, ever young,
 Like your renown. Your ashes we will cull.
 In yonder fane deposited, your urns,
 Dear to the Muses, shall our lays inspire.
 Whatever off'rings genius, science, art,
 Can dedicate to virtue, shall be yours,
 The gifts of all the Muses, to transmit
 You on th' enliven'd canvass, marble, brass,
 In wisdom's volume, in the poet's song,
 In ev'ry tongue, through ev'ry age and clime;
 You of this earth the brightest flow'rs, not crop'd,
 Transplanted only to immortal bloom
 Of praise with men, of happiness with gods.⁵

The Grecian valour on religion's flame
 To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh.
 As by the Graces fashion'd, he appears
 A beauteous form. His adamantine gate
 Is half unfolded. All in transport catch
 A glimpse of immortality. Elate
 In rapturous delusion, they believe
 That to behold and solemnize their fate,
 The goddesses are present on the hills
 With celebrating lyres. In thought serene
 Leonidas the kind deception bless'd,
 Nor undeceiv'd his soldiers. After all
 Th' incessant labours of the horrid night,

Through blood, through flames, continu'd, he prepares
In order'd battle to confront the pow'rs
Of Hyperaathes from the upper straits.

Not long the Greeks in expectation wait
Impatient. Sudden, with tumultuous shouts,
Like Nile's rude current, where, in deaf'ning roar,
Prone from the steep of Elephantis, falls
A sea of waters, Hyperaathes pours
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van
They march conductors. On the Persians roll,
In martial thunder, through the sounding pass.
They issue forth, impetuous, from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign;
When, as th' impulsive ram in forceful sway
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,
And strews a town with ruin, so the band
Of serry'd heroes down the Malian steep,
Tremendous depth, the mix'd battalions swept
Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.
Abrupt and naked, all was rock beneath.
Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength
Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag;
Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word
His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass.
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.
Ev'n Hyperaathes shrinks in wonder back.
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.
The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king
Still presses forward, till an open breadth
Of fifty paces yields his front extent
To proffer battle. Hyperaathes soon
Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud
Of darts are show'd. Th' encount'ring armies close.

Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curses sounding from the lips
Of noble mothers, waiting for their sons?
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd
For those whom thy unconquerable sword

This day to vultures cast? First Bessus died,
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profusion o'er the goblet roan'd.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd;
He long assiduous, unavailing, woo'd
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear
Was fram'd to watch the tempest while it rag'd,
Her eye accusom'd on the rolling deck
To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore
She now is present in her pinnace light,
'The spectacle of glory crowds her breast
With diff'rent passions. Valiant, she applauds
The Grecian valour; faithful, she laments
Her sad presage of Persia; prompts her son
To emulation of the Greeks in arms,
And of herself in loyalty. By fate
Is she reserv'd to signalize that day
Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold
The blood of nations overflow his decks,
And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
Of Salamis; whence she with Asia flies,
She only not inglorious. Low reclines
Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat
Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves
His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,
A Paphlagonian. Born amid the sound
Of chafing surges, and the roar of winds,
He o'er th' inhospitable Euxine foam
Was wont, from high Carambis' rock, to ken
Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream;
Then, with his dire associates, through the deep
For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.
Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far,
Their native current, two bold brothers died,
Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
Cilician Prince, Lileus, who had left

The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields,
With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.

The growing carnage Hyperanthes views
Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
Against the victor. Each his lance protends.
But Asia's numbers interpose their shields,
Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd:
Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,
His term protracting for augmented fame.
So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,
Present for battle their destructive beaks;
When ridgy seas, by hurricanes upborn,
In mountainous commotion dash between,
And either deck, in black'ning tempest veil'd,
Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd
Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay
Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart
Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds
Of day were climbing their meridian height.
Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass
Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard.
When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd
His distant quarter, starting from repose,
He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd,
To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
He found the seat of terror and despair.
As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known
The rage of winds and floods, although the storm
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
Still o'er the wasted region nature mourns
In melancholy silence; through the grove
With prostrate glories lie the stately oak,
Th' uprooted elm and beach; the plain is spread
With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown;
Around the pastures, flocks, and herds are cast
In dreary piles of death: so Persia's host,
In terror mute, one boundless scene displays
Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,
Her tall pavilions and her martial cars
Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore
Her princes welter, nameless thousands there,
Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping leaps

Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, shew'd
The wild confusion of that direful night,
When, wanting signals, and a leader's care,
They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent
On its exalted summit, when the dawn
First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear
The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
Two lucid crystals. This the gen'ral host
Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange
In arms complete, and numberless to watch
Their monarch's rising. This conspicuous blaze
Artuchus places in th' accustom'd seat.
As, after winds have ruffled by a storm
The plumes of darkness, when her welcome face
The morning lifts serene, each wary swain
Collects his flock dispers'd; the neighing steed,
The herds forsake their shelter; all return
To well-known pastures, and frequented streams:
So now this cheering signal on the tent
Revives each leader. From inglorious flight
Their scatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground
Resume, and hail Artuchus. From their swarms
A force he culls. Thermopylae he seeks.
Fell shouts in horrid dissonance precede.

His phalanx swift Leonidas commands
To circle backward from the Malian bay.
Their order changes. Now, half-embay'd, they stand
By Oeta's fence protected from behind,
With either flank united to the rock.
As by th' excelling architect dispos'd
To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,
Form'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,
In ocean's bosom penetrates afar:
There, pride of art, immovable it looks
On Eolus and Neptune; there defies
Those potent gods combin'd: unyielding thus,
The Grecians stood a solid mass of war
Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
To Hyperanthes. In the foremost rank
Leonidas his dreadful station held.
Around him soon a spacious void was seen,
By flight or slaughter in the Persian van.

In gen'rous shame and wrath Artuchus burns,
Discharging full at Lacedæmon's chief
An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside,
Turn'd by the massy buckler. Prone to earth
The satrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,
Which had transfix'd him prostrate on the rock,
But for th' immediate succour he obtain'd
From faithful soldiers, lifting on their shields
A chief belov'd. Not such Alcander's lot.
An arrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,
The only Theban who to Greece preserv'd
Unviolated faith. Physician sage,
On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull
Was he accusom'd, to expatiate o'er
The Heliconian pastures, where no plants
Of poison spring, of juice salubrious all,
Which vipers, winding in their verdant track,
Drink, and expel the venom from their tooth,
Dipt in the sweetness of that soil divine.
On him the brave Artontes sinks in death,
Renown'd through wide Bithynia, ne'er again
The clam'rous rites of Cybelé to share;
While echo murmurs through the hollow caves
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The strength
Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.
Ere from the dead was disengag'd the spear,
Huge Abradates, glorying in his might,
Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd
To grapple; planting firm his foremost step,
The victor's throat he grasp'd. At Nemea's games
The wrestler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.
He summons all his art. Oblique the stroke
Of his swift foot supplants the Persian's heel.
He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.
To Abradates' chest the weapons pass;
They rivet both in death. This Maron sees,
This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn
Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corse.
At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear

Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous ax
Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood
The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd,
The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted inace
Left by Artuchus; but thy fatal blade,
Abrocomes, that dreadful instant watch'd
To rend his op'ning side. Unconquer'd still,
Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front
A pond'rous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.
Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows
Of vital crimson. Smiling, he reflects
On sorrow finish'd, on his Spartan name,
Renew'd in lustre. Sudden to his side
Springs Dithyrambus. Through th' unplifted arm
Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart
Against the dying Spartan, he impell'd
His spear. The point, with violence unspent,
Urg'd by such vigour, reach'd the Persian's throat
Above his corselet. Polydorus stretch'd
His languid hand to Thespia's friendly youth,
Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace;
While Mindus, wasted by his streaming wound,
Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime
He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn,
His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey.
She tow'rd the Euxine sends her plaintive sighs;
She woos in tender piety the winds:
Vain is their favour; they can never breathe
On his returning sail. At once a crowd
Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear.
One of his nervous hands retains it fast,
The other bears his falchion. Wounds and death
He scatters round. Sosarmes feels his arm
Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves entwin'd
His fingers round the long-disputed lance.
On Mardon's reins descends the pond'rous blade,
Which half divides his body. Pheron strides
Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
The weary'd Thespian, who resigns his hold,
But cleaves th' elate Barbarian to the brain.
Abrocomes darts forward, shakes his steel,
Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek

Wards with his sword the well-directed stroke,
Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid
Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n,
Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend
Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge
That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend
A brother's life; beneath the sinewy arm
Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd
Through Dithyrambus. All the strings of life
At once relax; nor fame, nor Greece, demand
More from his valour. Prostrate now he lies
In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.
Him shall the Thespian maidens in their songs
Record, once loveliest of the youthful train,
The gentle, wise, beneficent and brave,
Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,
Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul
Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme
Among the groves of Libanus bath tow'r'd,
Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, preferr'd,
For dignity of growth, some royal dome
Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.
Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend
He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd
His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd;
Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,
Ere from a Cissian's prostrate body freed,
Their pond'rous maces all discharge. It broke.
Still with a shatter'd truncheon he maintains
Unequal fight. Impetuous, through his eye
The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain
Of one bold warrior; there the splinter'd wood,
Infix'd, remains. The hero last unsheaths
His falchion broad. A second sees aghast
His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
The head, steel-cas'd, descends. In blood is roll'd
The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade
Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.
The fourth, Astaspes, proud Chaldaean lord,
Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.
This, while a cluster of auxiliar friends

Hang on the Grecian shield, to earth depress'd,
Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm;
Till on the ground Diomedon extends
His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force
Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tow'r'd,
Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd
Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads
Its disuniting ramparts on the ground;
Joy fills th' assailants, and the battle's tide
Whicms o'er the wid'ning breach. The Persians thus
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
Against the Grecian remnant; when behold
Leonidas! At once their ardour froze.
He had awhile behind his friends retir'd,
Oppress'd by labour. Pointless was his spear,
His buckler cleft. As, overworn by storms,
A vessel steers to some protecting bay;
Then, soon as timely gales inviting curl
The azure floods, to Neptune shews again
Her masts, apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails,
Which court the vig'rous wind; so Sparta's king,
In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new
Presents to Asia. From her bleeding ranks
Hydarnes, urg'd by destiny, approach'd.
He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race,
A spouse, lamenting on the distant verge
Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will sport
Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian spoils,
Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind,
Fate will erase for ever. Through the targe,
The thick-mail'd corselet, his divided chest
Of bony strength admits the hostile spear.
Leonidas draws back the steely point,
Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow.
Meantime within his buckler's rim, unseen,
Amphistreus stealing, in th' unguarded flank
His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd
The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death
Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king
Gripes irresistibly the Persian's throat.

He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt, and base,
Fallacious, fell, pre-eminent was he
Among tyrannic satraps. Phrygia pin'd
Beneath th' oppression of his ruthless sway.
Her soil had once been fruitful; once her towns
Were populous and rich. The direful change,
To naked fields and crumbling roofs, declar'd
Th' accurs'd Amphistreu's govern'd. As the spear
Of Tyrian Cadmus rivetted to earth
The pois'nous dragon, whose infectious breath
Had blasted all Bœotia; so the king
On prone Amphistreu's trampling, to the rock
Nails down the tyrant, and the fractured staff
Leaves in his panting body. But the blood,
Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives
The hopes of Persia. Thy unyielding arm
Upholds the conflict still. Against thy shield
The various weapons shiver, and thy feet
With glitt'ring points surround. The Lydian sword,
The Persian dagger, leave their shatter'd hilts;
Bent is the Caspian scymetar; the lance,
The javelin, dart and arrow, all combine
Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,
Thou stand'st unshaken, like a Thracian hill,
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain
The thund'rer plants his livid bolt; in vain
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce th' encrusted snow;
And winter, beating with eternal war,
Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms,
Chill sleet, and clatt'ring hail. Advancing bold,
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain
Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief.
He, not unguarded, rears his active blade
Athwart the dang'rous blow, whose fury wastes
Above his crest in air. Then, swiftly wheel'd,
The pond'rous weapon cleaves the Persian's knee
Sheer through the parted bone. He sidelong falls,
Crush'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
Great Xerxes' brother yields the last remains
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas persists;
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms
Demophilus, Megistias: they o'er piles

Of Alarodian and Sasperian dead
Haste to their leader; they before him raise
The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.
The foremost rank of Asia stands and bleeds,
The rest recoil: but Hyperanthes swift
From band to band his various host pervades,
Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave
New fortitude excites, the frigid heart
Of fear he warms. Astaspes first obeys,
Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,
Proud of his wealthy stores, his stately domes,
More proud in recent victory: his might
Has foil'd Plataea's chief. Before the front
He strides impetuous. His triumphant mace
Against the brave Dieneces he bends.
The weighty blow bears down th' opposing shield,
And breaks the Spartan's shoulder. Idle hangs
The weak defence, and loads th' inactive arm,
Depriv'd of ev'ry function. Agis bares
His vengeful blade. At two well-levell'd strokes,
Of both his hands, high brandishing the mace,
He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief
Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks
To this brave savage gave his name and birth.
His look erect, his bold deportment, spoke
A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,
With dreary wilds familiar, and a race
Of rude Barbarians, horrid as their clime.
From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear,
Which, upward borne, o'erturn'd his iron cone.
Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;
They aggravate his fury; while his foe,
Repeats the stroke and penetrates his chest.
Th' intrepid Sacian through his breast and back
Receives the grinding steel. Along the staff
He writhes his tortur'd body; in his grasp
A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes;
Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides
The deadly point; then grimly smiles and dies.

From him fate hastens to a nobler prey,
Dieneces. His undefended frame
The shield abandons, sliding from his arm.

His breast is gor'd by javelins. On the foe
He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.
Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length
Forsakes his riven heart; nor less in death
Thermopylæ he graces than before
By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem
The barb'rous torrent? Agis bleeds. His spear
Lies useless, irrecoverably plung'd
In Jaxartes's body. Lów reclines
Dienecces. Leonidas himself,
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted sword
The rage of war can exercise no more.
One last, one glorious effort age performs.
Demophilus, Megistias, join their might.
They check the tide of conquest; while the spear
Of slain Dienecces to Sparta's chief
The fainting Agis bears. The pointed ash,
In that dire hand for battle rear'd anew,
Blasts ev'ry Persian's valour. Back in heaps
They roll, confounded; by their gen'ral's voice
In vain exhorted longer to endure
The ceaseless waste of that unconquer'd arm.
So, when the giants from Olympus chas'd
Th' inferior gods, themselves in terror shun'd
Th' incessant streams of lightning, where the hand
Of heav'n's great father with eternal might
Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field
Awhile Bellona gives the battle rest,
When Thespia's leader and Megistias drop
At either side of Lacedæmon's king.
Beneath the weight of years and labour bend
The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests
Their parting spirits; but in death's calm night
All-silent sinks each venerable head.
Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots
Had pierc'd resistless through a craggy slope;
There, during three long centuries, have brav'd
Malignant Eurus, and the boist'rous north;
Till, bare and sapless by corroding time,
Without a blast, their mossy trunks recline
Before their parent hill. Not one remains,
But Agis, near Leonidas, whose hand

the last kind office to his friend performs,
tracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,
hurs forth in crimson floods. O Agis, pale
thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs;
they lose their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal
the native goodness of thy heart no more.
The other graces spring. The noble corse
Leonidas surveys. A pause he finds,
to mark how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
to see those honours on the breast he lov'd.
But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks
Asia's tow'rs, inflexibly resolv'd
the Persian glory to redeem, or fall.
The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
lifts once more. He waits the dauntless prince.
The heroes now stand adverse. Each awhile
he strains his valour. Each, admiring views
the godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points
 provoke the contest, fated soon to close
the long-contin'd horrors of the day.
Mov'd in amaze and fear, the Asian throng,
mov'd and silent, on their bucklers pause.
He is on the wastes of India, while the earth
beneath him groans, the elephant is seen,
the huge proboscis writhing, to defy
the strong rhinoceros, whose pond'rous horn
newly whetted on a rock. Anon
the hideous bulk encounters. Earth her groan
redoubles. Trembling, from their covert gaze
the savage inmates of surrounding woods
feel distant terror. By the vary'd art
neither chief the dubious combat long
the great event retarded. Now his lance
hear through the hostile shield Laconia's king
he appell'd. Aside the Persian swung his arm.
Beneath it pass'd the weapon, which his targe
encumber'd. Hopes of conquest and renown
late his courage. Sudden he directs
his rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat.
But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,
which o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel;
For one last effort then his scatter'd strength

Collecting, levell'd with resistless force
The massive orb, and dash'd its brazen verge
Full on the Persian's forehead. Down he sunk,
Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
Beneath a marble fragment, from its seat
Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge
Of some aspiring mansion. Gen'rous prince! -
What could his valour more? His single might
He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
Before his native bands. The Spartan king
Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends,
All stretch'd around him, lie. The distant foes
Show'r on his head innumerable darts.
From various sluices gush the vital floods;
They stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
His brow is clouded; but those beauteous wounds,
The sacred pledges of his own renown,
And Sparta's safety, in serenest joy
His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
No brighter laurels round his glorious head;
His virtue more to labour fate forbids,
And lays him now in honourable rest,
To seal his country's liberty by death.

THE END.

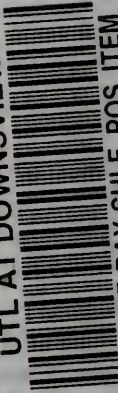


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